

# Postsecondary Education Rigor Analysis

## Iowa Legislative Services Agency

Proposal

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## Introduction

As we continue to grow as a global, knowledge-based economy, it becomes increasingly important to have an educated population. In addition, it is increasingly important to educate a larger percentage of the population. For many in the potential workforce—and particularly for students traditionally underserved in postsecondary education—community colleges are their entry point for this education. According to the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), almost 50 percent of the students receiving a baccalaureate degree had attended a community college at some point during their undergraduate career. Students who choose to begin their education in community colleges and transfer into four-year institutions often face challenges different from those faced by students who are native to, or began their education at, four-year universities. These challenges include cultural differences, challenges in getting the correct or enough information about college expectations and transfer processes, lack of curricular alignment, and unclear articulation agreements. In addition, lack of adequate academic advising and insufficient preparation for college are cited as challenges (Melguizo & Dowd, 2006; Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2008). Any of these factors, left unexplored and unaddressed, can contribute to a reduced graduation rate from postsecondary education and a potential loss to the workforce. In order to ensure that a state's population is prepared to participate in and contribute to the state's economy, the state must understand the challenges associated with postsecondary education success and establish policies and procedures designed to address these challenges.

Iowa has 15 public, postsecondary, two-year institutions in the state, hereafter referred to as community colleges. The state also has three universities governed by the Board of Regents, hereafter referred to as Regents universities. Iowa has demonstrated its commitment to supporting postsecondary education success by transfer students through the implementation of programs and resources to assist students who wish to transfer from community colleges into Regents universities. One such resource, the *Transfer in Iowa* website ([www.transferiniowa.org](http://www.transferiniowa.org)), is designed to inform students how credits they have successfully completed at a community college will transfer into any of the three Regents universities. In addition, Iowa has in place the Regent Admission Index (RAI). This index comprises four factors that predict success at Regents universities: ACT or SAT test score, high school rank, high school cumulative grade point average, and number of completed high school core courses. Students are able to access this index and determine their scores. Certain scores allow for automatic admission to a Regents university. While these resources demonstrate the value placed on ease of transfer and success into a Regents university, a deeper analysis of factors contributing to, or hindering, student success is needed.

The proposed study is designed to help Iowa determine the success rates of its postsecondary education students who transfer from community colleges to Regents universities, determine any existing barriers that affect these success rates—including but not limited to the academic rigor of their first two years of postsecondary coursework taken at the community colleges—describe strategies to address these barriers using current research and innovative practice in other states, explore how issues related to accreditation standards of faculty teaching lower-division college courses may affect success of transfer students, and create a definition of rigor and standards by which to assess the level of rigor in lower-division courses offered at Iowa community colleges

and Regents universities. Following is a detailed description of the proposed study and the research basis for this work.

## **Components of the Proposed Study**

The Regents universities to be included in this study are Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, and the University of Iowa. The community colleges included will be the 15 public, postsecondary, two-year institutions in the state. In accordance with the request for proposals for this work, transfer students included in the study will be limited to those transferring into colleges of arts and sciences in the Regents universities, including students originally pursuing career/vocational technical courses of study at the community college who subsequently transferred into a college of arts and sciences at a Regents university. The components of the study will consist of defining and determining success and success rates for community college transfer students as compared with native Regents university students; developing a profile of a “successful” student based on an analysis of course-taking patterns, grades received, test scores, and other variables; identifying policy and programmatic factors that may influence success rates including degree requirements at the included institutions, articulation agreements, and the availability of other student support factors that may influence success of transfer students; and developing a standard of rigor by which lower-division coursework at community colleges and Regents universities can be evaluated. To further explore student success, data will be gathered on credentials of the individuals responsible for teaching lower-division courses in community colleges and Regents universities.

### **Define and Determine Success Rates**

Postsecondary education success can be defined using factors within the university setting or those achieved only postgraduation. Variables within the university setting include grades received in upper-division courses and graduation with a baccalaureate degree. External variables include employment rates and employer satisfaction with university graduates. For the proposed study, success rates will be defined using internal factors only—specifically, grades received in upper-division coursework taken subsequent to transfer from a community college and graduation rates of transfer versus native Regents university students. Because success in postsecondary education is expected to lead to employment and contribution to a state’s economy, however, an option for expanded work analyzing employment data is included in this proposal.

Initial work will proceed with an analysis of individual student records, which will require extraction from student database files from all 15 Iowa community colleges and three Regents universities. Data will be from the fall data extraction. Each fall data extraction should include any activity in the previous year (e.g., fall 1998 extraction includes activity in spring 1998, summer 1998, and fall 1998).

For purposes of initial data gathering, success will be defined as graduation from a Regents university by the end of the summer term 2007 and performance on nonelective, upper-division courses (courses required for degree) subsequent to transfer through receipt of a letter grade C (2.0) or higher. It is important to limit accepted data to those credits transferred toward the degree

requirements as there is concern that not limiting the field has clouded research findings (Roksa & Keith, 2008). This same information will be gathered for native, or nontransfer, Regents university students. Sources for these data will include transcripts from students at the 15 identified community colleges and the three Regents universities. Because community college students are the focus, we suggest at least a 10-year time frame be used for the analysis. Beginning with fall 1997, entry into community colleges in the state will allow one cohort of students to have 10 years for successful transition into (or through to graduation from) a Regents university. However, note that by focusing only on those students who enter community colleges, it is unknown how many high school students (or graduates)—based on their high school course-taking patterns, grades, and test scores—were eligible to pursue postsecondary education but chose not to.

In addition, data for all students enrolled at each of the 15 community colleges and three Regents universities should be provided to allow comparisons of native students (those who only attended a single institution) and transfer students (any student who attended two or more institutions). For instance, true transfer students from a community college may struggle with subsequent courses at a Regents university, or all students including those who were native to the Regents university may struggle as well.

To enable accurate analysis of seamless transition for students in the academic years covered (fall 1997 through fall 2008), access to transfer and articulation agreements that were in place during that time should also be provided, including lists such as those contained in *The Public Connection: A Comprehensive View of Articulation between Iowa's Community Colleges and the Regent Universities* (Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students, 2008). These lists should be provided in electronic form to ease import and analysis. After useable data are provided, files will be matched based on student identifiers. Then, student course-taking patterns will be analyzed to determine the following:

- If students took courses they were placed in (or not) at a single institution.
- If student took courses in correct sequences at a single institution.
- Evidence that single-institution course sequences are working, based on student grades and subsequent progression.
- Evidence that students who completed a course sequence at one institution did or did not have to repeat any part of that course sequence at a subsequent institution. If repeating courses was required, investigation of student grades and characteristics to determine potential reasons.
- Evidence of student performance for those students who completed course sequences at one institution compared to those who complete the analogous course sequences as natives.

Iowa responses to the 2007 Data Quality Campaign survey questions indicate that some form of common student identifier is in use in the state. It is unclear how reliably this identifier is used by all institutions. If a common student identifier is not in use across all of these institutions, a method must be worked out that will allow this research to accurately link student records from multiple institutions. Success as measured by graduation rates will include any students who have

transferred into a Regents university and graduated with a baccalaureate degree within the 10-year period of the data period.

Specifically, the data to be included in the analyses are as follows:

**A. Unique Identifier for the Purpose of This Study (to be determined)**

A1. Student identifier

**B. Student Demographics and Test Scores**

B1. Sex (female, male)

B2. Race (African American, American Indian, Asian, white, other)

B3. Ethnicity (Hispanic, non-Hispanic)

B4. Income level or associated proxy

B5. Limited English proficiency? (Y/N)

B6. Student has a disability? (Y/N)

B7. Cohort designator (year of first year/first-year fall enrollment) (YYYY)

B8. ACT score

B9. Name of placement test

B10. Placement test score(s) [repeat as necessary]

**C. Student's Associated Course and Grade Data**

C1. Year course was taken

C2. Term course was taken

C3. Student's official level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) that term

C4. Student dual enrolled this term? (Y/N)

C5. Student considered a transfer study by institution? (Y/N)

C6. Student's major this term

C7. Student's college of enrollment this term

C8. Course title

C9. Course number

C10. Number of credits

C11. Student's course grade including drops and withdrawals

C12. Course covered by local district to community college sharing agreement? (Y/N)

C13. Course considered an arts and sciences course (A) or a vocational technical course (T)? (Alternatively, colleges can provide electronic lists of course titles and/or course numbers with this information associated with it.)

C14. [for Regents universities] Course accepted for transfer?

C15. Number of credits accepted for transfer?

**D. Student Success Measures**

D1. Graduated? (Y/N)

D2. Date of graduation

D3. Type of degree awarded

D4. Discipline of degree awarded

D5. Final GPA

In order to explore most fully the issue of postsecondary education student success, it is recommended that the Iowa Legislature considers including a postgraduation component to the analysis. True success, for purposes of the state economic outlook, includes whether or not

university graduates become successfully employed and contribute to the state's economy. While it appears that the Iowa Board of Regents called for the development of a task force to create standards for reports by the Regents universities on postgraduation employment of the students, it is unclear the extent to which this reporting process has been implemented. This postgraduation component would be an analysis of labor data to determine the rates at which graduates from Regents universities were employed. It should also include surveys of businesses that employ these graduates to determine overall employer satisfaction and the extent to which these employers feel students graduated ready to work. This additional employment-related research constitutes a second option for this component of the study. Associated tasks and a second budget (designated as Option 2 in the proposed budget) are included in this proposal.

After analysis of the data to determine success rates, successful student data will be further analyzed and compared with data of less successful students to explore whether a profile of a successful course-taking pattern may be established. These data will be used in an analysis to define rigor and to create standards whereby courses and curriculum will be evaluated. This study component is further described below.

### **Identify Barriers and Potential Solutions to Transfer Student Success**

Research has found a variety of factors that may impact success of transfer college students. In its report, the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2008) notes that barriers to transfer fall into five categories: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial. Academic barriers include a lack of academic advising at community colleges and insufficient academic preparation. Social barriers include competing social commitments experienced by the majority of community college students such as full-time work, dependents, and commuting times. Another social barrier involves cultural differences such as minority students encountering stereotypes and international students having immigration problems. Cultural problems are also noted for first-generation college students. In terms of informational barriers, community college students report they are not likely to take course placement tests, have advising on educational goals, or attend orientation sessions at community colleges. On the institutional side, community colleges often lack transfer centers, do not place enough emphasis on transferring as a goal for students, and do not provide easy access to information on transferring and financial aid at four-year institutions. Complexity barriers revolve around curricular alignment, articulation agreements, and common course-numbering systems. In addition, the multiple missions of community colleges result in a lack of coordination among the remedial, workforce, and academic programs within community colleges. Financial barriers include higher tuition costs at four-year institutions, additional costs for transportation and room and board, lack of institutional aid targeted specifically for transfer students, and the perceived impact of work status on the availability of financial aid.

While the Iowa Legislature's request for proposals for this study focuses on academic rigor of coursework as a possible barrier to the success of students transferring from a community college to a Regents university, it is important not to ignore other possible factors at play. As with the definition and exploration of success, Learning Point Associates is proposing two options for work. The first would meet the requirements as stated in the Scope of Services from the request for proposals. The second would more fully explore possible barriers to transfer student success.



For the initial proposal, analysis will focus on academic factors, or factors related to seamless articulation between community colleges and Regents universities, only. In order to determine if challenges exist with seamless articulation, researchers will complete an analysis of course requirements at both community colleges and Regents universities for the designated disciplines. To complete this component of the study, researchers will need access to program requirements for the 10-year period in the study. Data will be gathered from the Iowa Board of Regents and/or Regents universities as appropriate. Data also will be gathered from each of the community colleges as to requirements for transfer degrees and/or the first two years of study. Information also will be pulled from the *Transfer in Iowa* website; however, because this website went live in July 2008, the agreements contained within it will not have informed the student population included in the study.

Programmatic requirements for the first two years of study for Regents university programs and community college programs will be compared to determine the extent to which these requirements are consistent, thereby supporting seamless articulation. To explore any challenges related to transfer of credits, transcript data also will be analyzed to determine the extent to which certain courses are accepted for transfer and used to satisfy programmatic or degree requirements rather than used as electives.

The second option would include a more complete exploration of factors outside of academics that may affect the success rate of transfer students. These would include the social, informational, complexity, and financial barriers outlined above. Data for this option would include determining what support systems exist at the community colleges and Regents universities designed to ameliorate the negative effects of these barriers. Community college and Regents university advising practices also should be investigated through surveys and phone or in-person interviews. In order to more fully explore factors involved in student transfer behavior, Iowa should consider including a student survey to determine both student understanding of the transfer policies and student actual activities in taking transferable courses. These data would shed light not only on the type of information shared through advising but also the students' understanding of that information and whether it influences their course-taking behavior. This additional investigation into institutional policy and practice along with the proposed survey of students constitutes a second option for this component of the study. Associated tasks and a second budget (designated as Option 2 in the proposed budget) are included in this proposal.

After investigating the various barriers related to the success of transfer students, Learning Point Associates will explore possible solutions that Iowa could implement. This phase of the study will be accomplished through research into actions and initiatives successfully implemented by other states to address these challenges. Learning Point Associates will work closely with the designated contact for Iowa to determine the feasibility of implementing these strategies in Iowa based on resources, governance structures, populations targeted, and other contextual factors. An evaluation of potential costs associated with proposed actions also will be prepared.

Examples of solutions other states are using include building partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions, developing support services for transfer students, establishing public goals to increase successful transfers, and increasing information and financial aid to transfer students. Although Iowa has implemented partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions in the form of 2+2 agreements, it is not yet known how well these agreements are working.

## **Develop a Standard for Academic Rigor and Methods by Which to Evaluate That Standard**

The question of rigor in educational curricula has been of long-standing interest in the education world. The dialogue usually focuses on high school curricula and whether, or to what extent, all American children graduate from high school “college ready” (ACT, 2007; Rainwater & Mize, 2008). The question of rigor in postsecondary education more frequently stops at the point of looking at success rates as graduation rates or performance on coursework, as outlined above (Lee, Mackie-Lewis, & Marks, 1993; Melguizo & Dowd, 2006; Townsend, Carr, & Scholes, 2003). The preceding illustrates two important issues. First, rigor must necessarily be defined by outcomes of education. One cannot determine whether or not a course or curriculum is rigorous solely by examining syllabi and course assignments in a vacuum. An outcome measure must be attached to this coursework and used as comparison criteria by which to determine which courses and course sequences produced more or less “success” based on this measure. Because of the lack of consistency around grading procedures within postsecondary institutions, to say nothing of the variation in these standards among institutions, course grades are not an adequate measure.

Second, a student’s education does not begin in college. The question of whether or not high school students graduate college ready clearly indicates a variation in the expected success of different students based on their program of coursework at the high school level. This issue becomes particularly salient when the option of dual enrollment exists and is taken advantage of by a certain percentage of students, as is the case in Iowa. This point further underscores the importance for this study to have access to high school transcripts to investigate these types of course-taking patterns and determine to what extent they affect subsequent performance in postsecondary education.

As noted, defining and investigating success rates will involve analyzing student transcripts from high school through all college work. For the investigation of rigor, course-taking patterns for students designated as successful will be compared students who are not designated as successful. In order to most clearly highlight these differences, and depending on the outcome of the analysis of success, student performance will be ranked and course-taking patterns for those students in the top quartile will be compared with those in the bottom quartile. As stated, because rigor necessarily depends on outcomes, the question of how to define and measure rigor in coursework will be one that is developed in collaboration with Iowa as the study progresses.

This task will be completed through an analysis of syllabi using an innovation configuration matrix. Frequently used as a method by which to determine whether and to what extent specific topics are covered, innovation configuration matrices provide a clear rubric by which to analyze course content as defined through the syllabus. Basically, an innovation configuration matrix identifies major components of interest and provides descriptions of their use as evidenced by the practice or artifact being investigated (Roy & Hord, 2004). For the purposes of this study, innovation configuration matrices would need to be developed for each type of course and the major components of interest identified. This process would be informed using course-taking patterns and courses of successful students and looking at commonalities among courses they had taken. Once developed, these matrices would be used to evaluate syllabi for other courses and/or to establish a standard of what should be addressed in a syllabus and, by extension, in a course. Learning Point Associates, through the REL Midwest, has used innovation configuration

mapping to investigate preparation of teachers for students with special needs related to classroom management and, therefore, has experience applying this technique in this context.

Regardless of findings related to student success, this method will be used to explore the uniformity or diversity of lower-division coursework between community colleges and Regents universities and among the 15 community colleges to be included in this study. Analysis of the consistency or divergence of required lower-division curriculum may also shed light on factors involved in success or challenges faced by transfer and native Regent university students.

### **Investigate Faculty Standards**

To fully investigate the education experience of Iowa students in their first two years of postsecondary education and thereby better understand factors involved in their success or challenges, we also will gather information on the credentials of individuals teaching lower-division courses. This component of the study is designed to investigate two variables: first, the qualifications of the individuals teaching lower-division curriculum; and second, the extent to which these qualifications are compliant with faculty standards as specified in North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Accreditation Standards (NCA CASI) and Iowa Code section 260C.36.

In this work, it will be important to determine who is actually teaching the course rather than which faculty member is the teacher of record for a course. Oftentimes lower-division postsecondary education courses are taught by graduate or teaching assistants rather than tenure-track or adjunct faculty. Therefore, teaching records will need to be obtained from the Regents universities and communities colleges. After the teachers are identified, information on their credentials, degrees, and experience will be gathered to determine compliance with accreditation standards and Iowa code. These facts will further inform the uniformity or diversity of course offerings as related to the credentials of the faculty teaching the courses. This facet of the study also may add detail to success of transfer and native university students and issues of standards and requirements for teachers of dual-enrollment courses.

### **Proposed Project Timeline (December 2008–June 2009)**

<b>Project Components and Tasks</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Component 1: Define and Determine Success</b>	
1.1: Request and receive student and transcript data as outlined in proposal	December 2008–January 15, 2009
1.2: Analyze data to determine success of transfer and native Regents universities	January 15, 2009–March 31, 2009
1.3: Create profile of successful student course-taking patterns	March 15, 2009–April 30, 2009
<i>Option 2 for Component 1</i>	
Task 1.4: Gather employment data	December 2008–January 15, 2009
Task 1.5: Create and disseminate survey on employer satisfaction	January 1, 2009–February 15, 2009
Task 1.6: Analyze employer data	February 15, 2009–March 15, 2009

<b>Project Components and Tasks</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Component 2: Identify Barriers and Potential Solutions to Transfer Student Success</b>	
Task 2.1: Gather degree program requirements for community colleges and Regents universities for past 10 years	December 2008–January 15, 2009
Task 2.2: Gather transfer and articulation agreements for past 10 years	December 2008–January 15, 2009
Task 2.3: Analyze degree program requirements for consistency	January 15, 2009–February 15, 2009
<i>Option 2 for Component 2</i>	
Task 2.4: Conduct literature review for nonacademic barriers to transfer student success	January 1, 2009–February 15, 2009
Task 2.5: Gather policy data and conduct interviews to determine student support factors designed to address nonacademic barriers to transfer student success	February 15, 2009–March 31, 2009
Task 2.6: Design survey instrument and send to transfer students	February 15, 2009–March 31, 2009
Task 2.7: Analyze data from Option 2 for Component 2	April 1, 2009–April 30, 2009
<b>Component 3: Study of Academic Rigor</b>	
Task 3.1: Collect syllabi for identified courses	April 1, 2009–April 30, 2009
Task 3.2: Create innovation configurations to evaluate syllabi	April 1, 2009–April 15, 2009
Task 3.3: Evaluate syllabi using innovation configurations	April 15, 2009–April 30, 2009
Task 3.4: Revise/review innovation configurations for use to evaluate courses	May 1, 2009–May 30, 2009
<b>Component 4: Investigate Faculty Standards</b>	
Task 4.1: Research faculty accreditation standards of accrediting agency and Iowa code	January 1, 2009–January 30, 2009
Task 4.2: Gather data on who teaches designated lower-division courses	December 15, 2009–January 30, 2009
Task 4.3: Gather data on teacher credentials	January 15, 2009–February 28, 2009
Task 4.4: Determine levels of compliance of course faculty with accreditation standards and Iowa code	March 1, 2009–March 31, 2009
<b>Reporting Requirements</b>	
First written progress report	January 2009
In-person report to committee	February 2009
Second written progress report	March 2009
Final report and in-person report to committee	June 2009

## **Project Management and Key Staff**

Learning Point Associates has a strong institutional structure—including systems of communication, collaboration, integration, risk management, and coherence—that allows for the effective management of both large and small contracts. In addition, we value and elicit input from and collaboration with clients of our work. For the proposed project, the project team will work collaboratively with identified contacts from the state of Iowa to refine the study design. Throughout the study process, this collaboration will continue as the project team gathers definitions of success and analysis of rigor. This collaboration will take the form of phone conferences twice a month, or as needed, between the Learning Point Associates project team and the identified contacts for Iowa.

### **Subcontract Arrangements**

Learning Point Associates proposes to subcontract with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) for the technical expertise required to analyze transcript and student success data and for the organization's extensive expertise in postsecondary education policy. Learning Point Associates intends to include subcontractor staff as fully integrated members of the district teams.

### **Key Project Staff**

**Tricia Coulter** (Ph.D., Counseling and Educational Psychology with specialty area in Consultation, University of Nevada–Reno). Dr. Coulter will act as the project director, providing general oversight and guidance on the proposed project. As deputy director of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality at Learning Point Associates, she is responsible for coordinating the TQ Center's work to build the capacity of regional comprehensive centers and states in implementing the highly qualified teacher requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Prior to assuming this position, she was the director of the Teaching Quality and Leadership Institute at the Education Commission of the States, where she created and managed the scope of work related to the preparation, support, and compensation of quality teachers and leaders. Dr. Coulter also has worked as a senior research analyst at the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization where she developed experience and expertise in teacher preparation and professional development. Dr. Coulter has extensive experience analyzing policy and research and using this information to help states in their efforts to create quality policy and innovative practice in response to their own needs and challenges related to teacher quality and leadership. She also has worked directly with states and districts in their work with federal reporting requirements and their efforts to ensure all their students are served by highly qualified teachers.

**Karen Paulson** (Ph.D., Higher Education with a minor in Policy Analysis, Pennsylvania State University). Dr. Paulson is a senior associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and will lead that organization's work in this study. Her areas of expertise include assessment, evaluation, and the use of data in state policymaking. Currently, she is evaluating state activities for the State Scholars Initiative, a program administered by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) for the federal Office of Vocational and Adult Education. She has evaluated numerous Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grants and Title III grants, and she recently completed work

with FIPSE on an evaluation website. She is the author of *Adult Learners in the United States: A National Profile* (co-authored with Marianne Boeke for the American Council on Education, 2006), *A Data Audit and Analysis Toolkit to Support Assessment of the First College Year* (2003), and *Following the Mobile Student: Can We Develop the Capacity for a Comprehensive Database to Assess Student Progression?* (co-authored with Peter Ewell and Paula Schild for the Lumina Foundation for Education Research Report, 2003). She previously worked on a team for a distributed evaluation effort for the National Science Foundation–funded Engineering Coalition of Schools for Excellence in Education and Leadership (ECSEL), which required working with local evaluators at seven universities to collect student-level data.

**Sabrina Laine** (Ph.D., Education Policy and Leadership, Indiana University). Dr. Laine will provide project oversight. She is a chief program officer at Learning Point Associates, the director of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and a principal investigator for the Center on Educator Compensation Reform. Dr. Laine has a diverse background in education policy research and teacher quality and has spearheaded efforts to contribute to policy research and resource development related to issues of teacher quality and quantity. Her work includes several published studies on teacher supply and demand, teacher professional development, alternative certification, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher turnover. As former chief officer for research and development at Learning Point Associates and acting director of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory<sup>®</sup> (NCREL<sup>®</sup>)—the regional educational laboratory (REL) serving the Midwest—Dr. Laine was responsible for a full-time staff of 45 and a \$9 million annual budget.

She is skilled in working closely and effectively with local, state, regional, and federal education agencies; sensitive to the challenges faced by educators in urban, rural, and low-performing schools; agile in establishing and sustaining collaborative relationships with other organizations; and efficient in managing both financial and human resources. Dr. Laine also is experienced in managing volunteer advisory boards, including serving on advisory boards of national organizations, such as the Education Commission of the States and the National Governors Association. Dr. Laine has worked for the last several years to ensure that policies and programs are in place that enable all children to have access to highly qualified teachers.

**Ted Stilwill** (M.S., Teaching, Drake University). Stilwill will act as a senior project advisor to provide high-level oversight and guidance. He brings an extensive repertoire of skills, experience, and field connections to the dual roles of chief operating officer for Learning Point Associates and chief officer for the State Services Group. As Iowa’s director of education for nearly 10 years, Stilwill oversaw the development, passage, and implementation of landmark teacher quality and student achievement legislation that improved the salary and professional development support systems for Iowa teachers while maintaining strong accountability for increased student learning. Prior to becoming the state’s chief state school officer, Stilwill served as the administrator of the Iowa Department of Education’s elementary and secondary education division for seven years. His career also includes 18 years in various classroom and administrative positions at the school and district levels. A past president and former board member of several organizations—including the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Education Commission of the States—Stilwill brings solid leadership ability and a national reputation for excellence to the position. He is skilled in project management, staff supervision, problem solving, general management, public speaking, and consensus building.

## Project Team

**Melissa Brown-Sims** (M.A., Social Science, University of Chicago). Brown-Sims is a research specialist at Learning Point Associates. As a member of the Teaching Quality and Leadership Team, she contributes to the content and quality of literature reviews and evaluation reports pertaining to teacher quality, education programs, and support and improvement initiatives. She assists in the design, development, and administration of data-collection protocols such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups, as well as the analysis of data. Brown-Sims also develops materials and resources for multiple audiences including policymakers, state education departments, school districts, schools, and teachers. Before coming to Learning Point Associates, Brown-Sims was a teacher's assistant for the Neighborhood Schools Program in Chicago where she supervised a classroom of 32 students, taught math, writing, and science as well as facilitated student projects, assignments, and presentations.

**Julie Reed Kochanek** (Ph.D., Sociology, University of Chicago). Dr. Kochanek is a senior research associate at Learning Point Associates, working for the REL Midwest. Her research focus has been school organization and leadership, and her work has resulted in many publications including a recent book for school practitioners titled *Building Trust for Better Schools: Research-Based Practices*. Other work has focused on measuring high school productivity, evaluating afterschool programs aimed at improving school-community relations, assessing gender differences in the science and math pipeline, and measuring student outcomes in relation to school size. Prior to working at Learning Point Associates, Dr. Kochanek was an assistant professor of sociology at Southern Oregon University where she served as principal investigator on several applied research projects, including a needs assessment of developmentally disabled adults and an evaluation of an early-childhood intervention aimed at increasing social services to preschool children. As a research analyst for the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, Dr. Kochanek gained expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. She has experience using multiple methods of data collection and conducting complex statistical analyses including multilevel regression modeling, logistic regression, and latent variable analysis. She is proficient in several statistical packages including SAS, SPSS, and HLM.

**Jim Lindsay** (Ph.D., Social Psychology, University of Missouri–Columbia). Dr. Lindsay is a senior research associate with the REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates. Presently, he oversees several projects, including a randomized control trial of a schoolwide adolescent literacy intervention as well as smaller studies on teacher preparation and states' efforts at estimating supply and demand of teachers. Dr. Lindsay's professional experience has focused on examining the efficacy of interventions and policies by reviewing and synthesizing pertinent literature and by creating and implementing rigorous research methodologies to address the topics. Prior to joining Learning Point Associates, he was a research associate at the University of Minnesota, where he designed and managed a randomized multicohort, multisite intervention study in collaboration with human service organizations. He also has worked as an evaluator of publicly funded health care delivery systems and child-abuse-prevention programs. Dr. Lindsay is an author of 13 articles and book chapters on several psychology and education-related topics, including the effects of homework on student achievement and alternative school calendars.

**Roshni Menon** (Ph.D., Family Studies and Human Development, University of Arizona). Dr. Menon is a policy research associate at Learning Point Associates. As part of the Educator Quality Group, she works on various research and evaluation projects looking at teacher quality. Dr. Menon brings both research and evaluation experience to Learning Point Associates, having worked for over five years on basic and applied research projects. She was previously at the Education Development Center's Center for Children and Technology studying the effectiveness of teacher professional development in different contexts (nationally and internationally) and formats (face-to-face and online). Before that, she was a research assistant at the University of Arizona on a longitudinal study looking at socialization of emotional competence in Mexican-American Head Start families with children ages 3 to 5 in southwestern states. Her focus in this study was on parental values, which kindled an interest in parental beliefs and their formation and maintenance that culminated in a dissertation exploring the same constructs. She also worked on several applied research projects within the Arizona Cooperative Extension, including youth development work, maintaining evaluation websites, and conducting several evaluation workshops.

## **Organizational Capacity and Experience**

### **Learning Point Associates Corporate Capabilities**

Learning Point Associates is a nonprofit educational organization with more than 20 years of direct experience working with and for educators and policymakers to transform education systems and student learning. The national and international reputation of Learning Point Associates is built on a solid foundation of designing and conducting client-centered evaluations; analyzing and synthesizing education policy trends and practices; delivering high-quality professional services; conducting rigorous and relevant education research and evaluation; and developing and delivering tools, services, and resources targeted at pressing education issues. Competencies include teacher quality, literacy, comprehensive school improvement, afterschool programming, and data for school improvement.

Learning Point Associates manages a diversified portfolio of work ranging from direct consulting assignments to major federal contracts and grants including the Midwestern regional educational laboratory (REL Midwest), the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center), Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center, The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, and the NCLB Implementation Center. Key to the success of Learning Point Associates is its ability to collaborate productively with other organizations, forging strategic alliances for added value and efficiency. By linking and convening organizations and agencies, Learning Point Associates allows partners and clients to become networked in ways that pool talents, maximize resources, and support continuous improvement. Internally, Learning Point Associates has established systems of communication, integration, risk management, and coherence that allow for the effective and efficient management of complex projects of varying scopes.

Headquartered at the Naperville campus of Northern Illinois University, located in west suburban Chicago's research and development corridor, Learning Point Associates also operates offices in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Chicago. Members of the Learning Point Associates staff



are accomplished professionals; more than two thirds of the program staff have advanced academic degrees and more than five years of experience in their particular fields. Staff members have substantial knowledge of and experience with case study research and writing; qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis; communication and dissemination of research findings; and effective project management to deliver high-quality services and products on time, on budget, and on target.

## **Relevant Experience**

### **Policy Study**

In the education policy arena, Learning Point Associates influences the quality of state and national conversations by providing a neutral forum for the exchange of ideas and by disseminating timely research to inform key policymakers. Our policy-related efforts include conducting research to determine the efficacy and effectiveness of policy decisions, identifying key challenges in the education field and bringing research and evidence to bear on solutions proposed, providing a neutral forum for dialogue and debate on education policy and practice, and disseminating evidence-based research intended to inform key state and local leaders and improve the education policymaking process. Our clients and constituents include legislators, governors, state leaders, businesses, schools, districts, state departments of education, chief state school officers, and members of Congress. We conduct research and analyses, recommending strategies and developing communication vehicles in ways that are collaborative, evidence-based, nonpartisan, and easily accessible by multiple audiences. Drawing on our experience working collaboratively with seven Midwestern states under five regional educational laboratory contracts, Learning Point Associates works on numerous policy and research and development projects—some of which are described in this section. Additional information regarding contract reference numbers, periods of performance, and contact persons is listed in the following sections with descriptions of the work and its relevance to the evaluation criteria included in the RFP.

**REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates (1980–2011).** REL Midwest, part of a federally funded network of 10 regional educational laboratories, exists to bring the latest and best research and proven practices into school improvement efforts. Serving Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin continuously since 1980, REL Midwest provides policymakers and practitioners with resources based on the highest quality evidence as defined by scientifically valid research principles. One example of the policy work conducted through our REL contract was carried out in 2006, as follows: In response to a request from the Iowa Department of Education, REL Midwest prepared a legislative brief summarizing the impact of Iowa’s 2001 policy on student achievement. REL Midwest compared 2001 and 2004 comprehensive school improvement plans from 30 Iowa districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status. The comparison focused on the four teacher quality components of the 2001 policy, namely professional development, mentoring and induction, teacher evaluation, and teacher retention. (Final Legislative Brief included in Appendix B)

**Contract Reference Number:** ED-06-00-0019

**Contact:** Dean Gerdeman, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences

**Phone:** 202-219-1373

**E-mail:** dean.gerdeman@ed.gov

## **Sensitivity to Political Conditions**

Throughout the history of the organization and continuing today, governors, chief state school officers, state departments of education, districts, schools, and regional offices of representatives and senators in Congress regularly call upon Learning Point Associates to provide them with research-based evidence to address critical education issues. The value of Learning Point Associates is based, in part, on its capacity to identify and respond to ongoing and emergent issues. Well-known throughout the region and nationally, Learning Point Associates provides expertise, tools, and strategies that help schools and districts engage in the vital work of sustained and continuous school improvement to support all children's learning. The projects listed below necessitate sensitivity to the political conditions at the state and local levels.

**The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) (2006–2011).** Learning Point Associates is a partner in the Center for Educator Compensation Reform, a \$17.5 million award made late in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Education. The primary purpose of the center is to oversee the federal Teacher Incentive Fund, a grant program that encourages the design and implementation of performance-based compensation systems at the state and district levels and offers incentives to highly qualified teachers to work in high-poverty schools. The center provides technical assistance to grantees and monitors program activities. Learning Point Associates leads the development of content for the center including a website and online clearinghouse of educator compensation reform strategies. Other partners include Synergy Enterprises Inc., the University of Wisconsin, and Vanderbilt University.

**Contract Reference Number:** ED-06-00-0110

**Contact:** Babette Gutman, Westat

**Phone:** 301-517-4006

**E-mail:** babettegutman@westat.com

**The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) (2005–10).** The TQ Center is a national resource dedicated to ensuring a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. It is part of the federal Comprehensive Centers program, which consists of 16 regional comprehensive assistance centers and five content centers. More information about the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Centers program is available online ([www.ed.gov/programs/newccp/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/newccp/index.html)). Each content center, including the TQ Center, is responsible for providing content-specific knowledge, expertise, and analyses to the regional comprehensive centers and the states served by them. Visit [www.tqsource.org](http://www.tqsource.org) for sample policy work developed by the TQ Center.

**Contract Reference Number:** 5283B050051

**Contact:** Fran Walter, U.S. Department of Education

**Phone:** 202-205-0687

**E-mail:** fran.walter@ed.gov

## **Interviewing and Presenting to a Variety of Education Stakeholders**

**The Study and Design of an Educator and Systemwide Performance Plan for the State of Iowa (2006–07).** In 2005, the Iowa Legislature formed the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce

(ITW), a nonprofit education foundation charged with ensuring that all Iowa students are rigorously and adequately prepared to compete in the 21st century global economy. To help them make the tough choices about where to focus resources, ITW retained Learning Point Associates to study the situation and develop performance-based recommendations. Learning Point Associates compiled relevant research and public input to develop bold, innovative recommendations focused on three intersecting priorities: learner performance, educator performance, and system performance. Using advisory work groups, focus groups, phone surveys, and information gleaned from various public meetings, Learning Point Associates gained useful insights from education stakeholders such as students, educators, administrators, area education agency staff, higher education faculty, business members, labor union members, government employees, and other individuals from the community. Recommendations were compiled in a print piece and widely disseminated across the state, including presentations by Learning Point Associates project staff to the state's Pay-for-Performance Commission, the congressional education committees, and the ITW Advisory Board. Recommendations were considered as part of the legislative agenda in 2007 and are again on the table for discussion in 2008. (Final report included in Appendix B.)

**Contract Reference Number:** NA

**Contact:** Jodie Butler, Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce

**Phone:** 515-965-0312

**E-mail:** jodie-butler@mchsi.com

**New York State Education Department Sanctioned Audit of the Written, Taught, and Tested Curriculum by No Child Left Behind (2005–08).** The New York State Education Department contracted with Learning Point Associates to conduct a comprehensive audit and develop an action plan for improvement in eight New York school districts: Buffalo, Hempstead, Rochester, Syracuse, Wyandanch, Yonkers, and Districts 3 and 31 in New York City. In conducting the audit, Learning Point Associates observed summer school and traditional school-year classes; interviewed district officials, principals, and teachers; analyzed student achievement data; and conducted the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum to gauge what is happening in classrooms and determine how that aligns with state standards and assessments. The project involved a detailed sampling plan for selecting schools and staff members for participation as well as significant data analysis and modeling to identify facilitators and barriers to student success. Audit findings are summarized in reports for district leadership and copresented by district project staff and Learning Point Associates to local stakeholders.

**Contract Reference Number:** NA

**Contact:** Robin Elliser, New York State Department of Education

**Phone:** 631-218-4125

**E-mail:** relliser@esboces.org

### **Additional Experience With Iowa-Based Programs and Initiatives**

**Iowa Enhanced Teacher Compensation (ETC) and Career Ladder Pilot Evaluation (2008–09).** Learning Point Associates was recently awarded the contract to evaluate the ETC and Career Ladder Pilot Program in three sites to identify cost-effective, feasible, and efficacious models and

recommend adjustments for scaled implementation of enhanced teacher compensation and career ladders within the state.

**Contract Reference Number:** 043209

**Contact:** Dianne Chadwick, Iowa Department of Education

**Phone:** 515-281-3718

**E-mail:** Dianne.chadwick@Iowa.gov

**Iowa Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant Evaluation (2005–08).** Currently, Learning Point Associates is partnering with the Iowa Department of Education on the evaluation of its Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) grant. The purpose of the evaluation is to support the mission of the Iowa TQE program in reforming and enhancing the teaching capacities of Iowa’s future teachers for the benefit of every child in the state. The evaluation measures interventions designed to promote improvements in the quality of new teachers through comprehensive statewide reform activities, focusing on the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement in PK–12 classrooms.

Within the TQE grant, the Cross-Articulation Team is focused on a variety of goals related to course transfer, including the possible creation of a statewide articulation agreement for community colleges and teacher education programs at four-year institutions. In January 2008, the Cross-Articulation Team commissioned Learning Point Associates to conduct a study to identify the barriers students face in the process of transferring from a community college to a teacher education program and the resources used by students in the transfer process. Learning Point Associates gathered information on these two aspects of the transfer process by conducting a survey of teacher education transfer students and interviewing community college advisors. The goal of this work is to provide universities and community colleges a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the transfer process. (Final Cross-Articulation report included in Appendix B.)

**Redesigning Iowa High Schools (2005).** With support from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory<sup>®</sup> (NCREL<sup>®</sup>), the Iowa Commissioner for Education asked Learning Point Associates staff to support the Iowa Community Meetings in 2005 that focused on strengthening Iowa’s high schools. Discussion topics included graduation requirements; opportunities to take challenging, relevant courses; and preparing students for success in postsecondary learning and in the workplace. Data regarding high school recommendations were recorded, and surveys were collected. A white paper was submitted to the Iowa Department of Education.

**Iowa’s Achievement Gap Task Force (2003–04).** Also under the NCREL umbrella, Learning Point Associates participated in this task force by facilitating a Data Retreat and orientation to achievement gaps for all task force members; shared research and best practices; and assisted with the general direction of the task force that included approximately 100 teacher leaders, principals, and other administrative staff.

## **National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Corporate Capabilities and Previous Work**

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is a private nonprofit (501)(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve strategic decision making in higher education for states and institutions in the United States and abroad. Through its more than 30 years of service to higher education, NCHEMS has been committed to bridging the gap between research and practice by placing the latest concepts and tools in the hands of higher education policymakers and administrators. Since its founding, NCHEMS has received widespread acclaim for developing practical responses to the strategic issues facing leaders of higher education institutions and agencies. With project support from multiple foundations, NCHEMS develops information and policy tools targeted at policymakers and institutional leaders that can help them set strategic directions and evaluate their effectiveness. NCHEMS also delivers research-based expertise, practical experience, information, and a range of management tools that can help institutions and higher education systems and states improve both their efficiency and their effectiveness. A particular hallmark of what the organization does is identifying and analyzing data drawn from multiple sources to help solve specific policy and strategic problems.

NCHEMS places these resources in the hands of stakeholders through a variety of means:

- Specific research, consulting, or development projects funded by institutions, consortia, state agencies, federal contracts, or foundations.
- Information services and resources that make the Center's extensive data holdings accessible to the higher education community.
- Publications and reports that disseminate research results, concepts, principles, and strategies to a wide audience of policymakers, administrators, and researchers.

Responsiveness to higher education's practical needs is a natural product of what NCHEMS does. Its greatest strength remains its ongoing working contact with higher education practitioners around significant problems.

NCHEMS has conducted research on student learning and pathways through postsecondary education at a number of levels. At the broadest level, it supports data used to develop "educational pipeline" measures used at the state level (visit *NCHEMS Information Center for State Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis*, the Web-based information site at [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org)). Projects that require collection of data from across state lines include investigating National Student Clearinghouse data and analyzing regional college and university data for the Lumina Foundation as well as collecting and analyzing high school student data from 47 districts in 10 states (in support of WICHE's State Scholars Initiative). State projects with which NCHEMS has been associated include the current Tennessee Board of Regents FIPSE project applying the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) methodology to developmental education courses at institutions across the Tennessee system; work on the Achieving the Dream project doing "data audits" in each participating state; and linking student data files to create student flow models in Arizona, Kentucky, and Ohio to increase performance on retention, transfer, and graduation rate. NCHEMS personnel also have conducted the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) validation study matching institutional student data with CCSSE data. NCHEMS was one of the lead organizations during initial buildout of Western Governors University, including cooperative development of learning

outcomes for competency-based degrees using faculty and employer working groups from across western states. Finally, at the system and institution levels, NCHEMS regularly links together data from multiple institutions.

## References

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- Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. (2008). *Transition matters: Community college to bachelor's degree*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Lee, V. E., Mackie-Lewis, C., & Marks, H. M. (1993). Persistence to the baccalaureate degree for students who transfer from community college. *American Journal of Education*, 102, 80–114.
- Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students. (2008). *The public connection: A comprehensive view of articulation between Iowa's community colleges and the Regent universities*. Iowa City, IA: Author. Retrieved November 5, 2008, from <http://www2.state.ia.us/regents/HigherEd/LACTS%20II08.pdf>
- Melguizo, T., & Dowd, A. C. (2006). *National estimates of transfer access and bachelor's degree attainment at four-year colleges and universities*. Los Angeles and Boston: University of Southern California and University of Massachusetts–Boston.
- Rainwater, T., & Mize, D. A. (2008). *Education beyond the rhetoric: Making "rigor" something real*. Boulder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.
- Roksa, J., & Keith, B. (2008). Credits, time, and attainment: Articulation policies and success after transfer. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30, 236–254.
- Roy, P., & Hord, S. M. (2004). Innovation configurations chart a measured course toward change. *Journal of Staff Development*, 25, 54–58.
- Townsend, B., Carr, D., & Scholes, R. (2003). *A comparison of transfer and native students' academic performance in a teacher education program*. Paper presented at the Biennial Transfer and Articulation Conference, Tampa, FL.

	<b>Task 1 – Define and Determine Success</b>	<b>Task 2 – Identify Barriers and Potential Solutions</b>	<b>Task 3 – Study of Academic Rigor</b>	<b>Task 4 – Investigate Faculty Standards</b>	<b>Total – All Tasks</b>
<b>Option 1</b>					
<b>Total Price</b>	<b>\$115,999</b>	<b>\$41,922</b>	<b>\$50,262</b>	<b>\$39,666</b>	<b>\$247,849</b>
<b>Staffing Summary (Hours)</b>					
Brown-Sims, Melissa	50	100	100	100	350
Coulter, Tricia	25	25	50	25	125
Kochanek, Julie	50	100	100	100	350
Laine, Sabrina	5	5	5	5	20
Lindsay, Jim.	50	100	100	100	350
Menon, Roshni	50	100	100	100	350
Publication Editing Staff	32	32	40		104
Stilwill, Ted	2	2	2	2	8
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>1,657</b>
<b>Option 2</b>					
<b>Total Price</b>	<b>\$166,945</b>	<b>\$60,482</b>	<b>\$52,487</b>	<b>\$39,666</b>	<b>\$319,580</b>
<b>Staffing Summary (Hours)</b>					
Brown-Sims, Melissa	100	100	100	100	400
Coulter, Tricia	40	40	50	25	155
Kochanek, Julie	100	150	100	100	450
Laine, Sabrina	5	5	5	5	20
Lindsay, Jim.	100	150	100	100	450
Menon, Roshni	100	100	100	100	400
Publication Editing Staff	32	32	40		104
Stilwill, Ted	2	2	2	2	8
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>1,987</b>



## **Appendix A**

### **Resumes**

**MELISSA BROWN-SIMS**

**Learning Point Associates**

20 N. Wacker Dr., Suite 1231

Chicago, IL 60606

312-288-7628

[melissa.brown-sims@learningpt.org](mailto:melissa.brown-sims@learningpt.org)

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**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Experience in writing literature reviews, evaluation and interim report and developing a variety of resources and materials for a variety of audiences such as policy makers, state education departments, school districts, and teachers.
- Trained in designing and administering quantitative and qualitative data collection protocols such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups to diverse populations. Skillful in analyzing and interpreting data collected.
- Broad experience in presenting research findings to large and diverse audiences.
- Experience designing research and evaluation activities such as developing timelines for data collection, determining data collection methods for multiple projects, and coordinating meetings for various projects

**ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

M.A.	University of Chicago	2006	Social Science
B.S.	Howard University	2005	Psychology

**WORK HISTORY:**

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, Illinois***

**Research Specialist**

**2006–Present**

Assist with literature reviews and other research-related activities in education policy and teacher quality by scanning, analyzing, and evaluating the quality of the research; establish relevant website content and databases; collect data for multiple projects by administering surveys to clients, conducting focus groups and conducting interviews; contribute to the content and quality of policy documents and reports by analyzing data collected, interpreting the findings, and writing assigned sections.

***The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois***

**Researcher and Student**

**2005–Present**

Designed, developed, and initiated research and Internal Review Board proposals and research project; conducted extensive literature reviews from various sources and created comprehensive written and oral reports of findings; collaborated with professors and colleagues in researching, writing, and applying for grants

***Neighborhood Schools Program, Chicago, Illinois***

**Teacher's Assistant**

**2005–2006**

Supervised a classroom of 32 students; taught mathematics, writing, and science as well as facilitated student projects, assignments, and presentations.

***Howard University, Washington, D.C.***

**Research Assistant**

**2003–2005**

Assisted with the design and implementation of pilot quantitative and qualitative surveys to diverse populations; administered questionnaires and cognitive tests on computers; coded and entered data into Excel and performed data analyses using SPSS and interpreted the results; presented findings at national and international conferences.

***Gannett Co., Inc., Washington, D.C.***

**ACD Operator**

**2002–2005**

Handled, answered, and resolved an average of 400 calls per day to employees, reporters, editors, and executives

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS:**

Craig-Henderson, K., & Brown, M. (2006). An investigation of African American college students' beliefs about anti-Middle Eastern hate crime and victims in the wake of September 11th. *Western Journal of Black Studies*.

**REFERENCES**

Judy Jeffery

Iowa Department of Education

Phone: 515-281-3436

Mary Beth Schroeder Fracek

Iowa Department of Education

Phone: 515-281-3160

Jane Delgado

The College Board

Phone: 212-713-8000

**TRICIA COULTER**

**Learning Point Associates**

1100 17th Street NW

Suite 500

Washington, DC 20036-4632

202-223-6690

[tricia.coulter@learningpt.org](mailto:tricia.coulter@learningpt.org)

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**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Over 10 years of experience in education research and policy at state and national levels
- Primarily responsible for creating, funding and managing a scope of work around teacher quality issues
- Experience analyzing policy at state and national levels to understand impact on state and district activities
- Extensive experience identifying and responding to requests for information and technical assistance
- Experience presenting complex ideas, practices and strategies to audiences of varying levels of knowledge and experience
- Responsible for supervising up to six full-time staff, including responsibilities for hiring, training, task assignment, evaluation and professional development
- Experience coordinating work with other internal departments and with external agencies and organizations

**ACADEMIC BACKGROUND**

Ph.D.	University of Nevada	2001	Counseling and Educational Psychology Specialty Area: Consultation
B.A.	University of Nevada	1992	Psychology

**WORK HISTORY:**

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, IL***

**Deputy Director for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality 2008–Present**

Responsible for providing content and administrative oversight for the work of the TQ Center in collaboration with the TQ Center Director and for contributing to the overall management and growth of the Educator Quality Team at Learning Point Associates. This work includes: managing product and service development; maintaining and enhancing client relationships; leading and contributing to the work of project teams; and pursuing new work and funding opportunities that further the goals and vision of the TQ Center, the Educator Quality Team and the organization.

***Education Commission of the State (ECS), Denver, CO***

**Director, Teaching Quality and Leadership Institute**

**2005–2008**

Responsible for managing all aspects of a policy unit including: establishing scope of work and prioritizing projects within that scope; securing funding; hiring, assigning and evaluating staff; ensuring compliance with all project requirements and reporting; coordinating work of unit with work of other units and departments within the organization; collaborating with other research and policy organizations; responding to requests for information on current research, policies, practices and national trends; representing the organization at regional and national conferences.

***State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), Denver, Colorado***

**Senior Research Analyst**

**2002–2005**

Responsible for compiling, summarizing and distributing information on postsecondary education policies, initiatives and legislation and working with representatives from state agencies of higher education, individually and collectively, to help further goals, efforts and initiatives in their states; responsible for facilitating group of state coordinators for federal grant program under No Child Left Behind Act including reviewing and synopsising legislation, acting as liaison with Department of Education Staff, convening meetings and facilitating information exchange; responded to constituent and external requests for information, collaboration and assistance; represented organization at national and regional conferences and task-oriented meetings.

***National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, Washington DC***

**National Center Fellow**

**2003–2004**

Responsible for reviewing and responding to draft publications and presentations by National Center staff and other national and state-level experts and for engaging in discussion and debate with the other associates from various national and state higher education related organizations.

***University and Community College System of Nevada, Reno, Nevada***

**Research Analyst**

**1999–2001 (part-time), 2001–2001(full-time)**

Responsible for gathering institutional, statewide, and national data from a variety of sources; providing background information and data for the creation of draft legislation; synthesizing data into reports for distribution to state legislators and state education personnel; responsible for interpreting state policy and procedure and responding with appropriate planning and reporting.

***University of Nevada, Reno-Counseling and Educational Psychology Department***

**Reno, Nevada**

**Instructor, Self-Study Report Consultant**

**1999–2000**

**Project Coordinator**

**1996–1998**

Taught select undergraduate and graduate courses; created curricula, grading format, lecture structure and content, and assessment methods for undergraduate educational psychology and graduate counseling courses; wrote self-study report for department for reaccreditation process for national accrediting agency resulting in renewal of accreditation for longest allowable period.

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS:**

Coulter, T. (2007). Implementing NCLB: State Plans to Address the Challenge of Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers. In C. Dwyer (Ed.), *America's Challenge: Effective Teachers for At-Risk Schools and Students* (pp. 55-69). Washington DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Coulter, T. (2007). *The Progress of Education Reform: Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Coulter, T. and Vandal, B. (2007). *Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation: Roles, Issues and Opportunities*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Kaufmann, J. and Coulter, T. (2006). "Preparing Teachers for At-Risk Schools: The Roles of the State and Federal Governments" *TQ Research and Policy Brief, 1 (3)*. Online publication of National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality ([www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)).

Phillips, R. and Coulter, T. (2006). "State Policy and the Equitable Distribution of Highly Qualified Teachers." *TQ Research and Policy Brief, 1 (2)*. Online publication of National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality ([www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)).

Coulter, T. (2006). "Teaching Students with Special Needs: What is the Role of State Policy?" *TQ Research and Policy Brief, 1 (1)*. Online publication of National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality ([www.ncctq.org](http://www.ncctq.org)).

Azordegan, J., Byrnett, P., Campbell, K., Greenman, J., and Coulter T. (2005). *Diversifying Teacher Compensation*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Coulter, T. (2003). *Issue Priorities and Trends in State Higher Education*. Denver, CO: State Higher Education Executive Officers.

Coulter, T., and Crowe, Ed. (2003). "The Role of State Postsecondary Education Policy in Supporting Teacher Education at the Community College." *The Role of the Community College in Teacher Education, New Directions for Community Colleges v 121*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

#### **PRESENTATIONS:**

Coulter, T (2008). *Policy Levers and Gaps in Addressing Availability, Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers for Urban, At-Risk Schools*. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association; New York City, New York.

Coulter, T. (2007). *Teacher Quality and Retention*. Presentation to the Governmental Research Association, Denver, CO.

Coulter T. *State Strategies for Equitable Teacher Distribution*. National webcast by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Coulter, T. (2006). *Diversified Teacher Compensation Systems*. Presentation to the Education Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference, Louisville, KY.

Coulter, T. (2005). *Diversified Teacher Compensation*. Presentation to government education policy analysts at the Education Commission of the States National Forum, Denver, CO.

#### **REFERENCES**

Fran Walter  
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Phone: 202-205-0687  
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Dr. Ed Crowe

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***JULIE REED KOCHANЕК, PH.D.***

**Learning Point Associates**

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**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Quantitative and qualitative researcher with experience in all phases of the research process including proposal writing, research design, data collection, data analysis and report submission
- Subject areas of expertise include research methodology, school leadership, organizational structure, and school-community relations
- Experienced manager of research teams

**ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

Ph.D.	University of Chicago	2003	Sociology
M.A.	University of California, Los Angeles	1991	African Studies, Education
B.A.	University of Notre Dame	1988	Government

**WORK HISTORY:**

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, IL***

**Senior Research Associate**

**2008–Present**

Direct various projects including evaluations and research dissemination. Provide consultation as part of the REL Midwest team on research design, data collection, and analysis for randomized control trials, needs sensing, and dissemination projects. Lead teams through research process from proposal development to reporting and disseminating.

***Southern Oregon University, Ashland, OR***

**Assistant Professor, Sociology**

**2004–2008**

Taught classes on educational organizations, gender, family, research methods and data analysis. Member of committee that designed institutional assessment plan for student learning.

***Consortium for Research and Evaluation of Social Services, Ashland, OR***

**Lead Researcher**

**2005–2008**

Organized researchers on campus to respond to needs of local social service agencies. Served as principal investigator on several projects including an evaluation of a government program designed to identify and serve “at-risk” pre-school children and a needs assessment for caregivers for the developmentally disabled. Participated in all areas of research process including design, data collection, analysis and reporting.

***University of Notre Dame, Center for Research on Educational Opportunity***

**Postdoctoral Fellow**

**2003–2004**

Taught courses on sociology of education and managing relationships in educational organizations. Provided consultation on research and publication for graduate students at the Center.



***University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research, Chicago, IL***

**Data Analyst**

**1998–2002**

Worked as both quantitative and qualitative analyst for various CCSR projects. Conducted a study of social capital development through the program evaluation of a 3-year primary grade intervention on conflict resolution implemented by a social service agency. Analyzed high school productivity using standardized test scores and adjusting them for student background characteristics and student body compositional effects. Created a database of latent ability scores for students entering Chicago public high schools from 1992 through 2001. Studied school size effects on student achievement and mediating factors.

***University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research, Chicago, IL***

**Research Assistant for Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider**

**1996–2002**

Collaborated with Bryk and Schneider on the research, analysis and writing of *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Improvement*.

***University of Chicago, NORC, Chicago, IL***

**Research Assistant, Sloan Study on Youth**

**1996–1997**

Lead teams of researchers to school sites across the country in final wave of data collection. Responsibilities included administering surveys to adolescents in the schools, arranging and conducting interviews with core subjects and their parents, and interviewing teachers and school staff.

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- Member, American Sociological Association
- Member, American Educational Research Association
- Occasional Reviewer, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*
- Occasional Reviewer, *American Journal of Education*
- Reviewer, American Educational Research Association, Sociology of Education SIG, 2005-Present
- Reviewer, American Educational Research Association, Division L: Education Policy and Politics, 2005-Present
- Reviewer, American Educational Research Association, Division G: Social Context of Education, 2005-Present

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS:**

Kochanek, Julie Reed, *Jackson County Developmentally Disabled Adult Needs Assessment*, Southern Oregon University, June 2005.

Kochanek, Julie Reed, *Building Trust for Better Schools*, Corwin Press, April 2005.

Miller, Shazia R., Allensworth, Elaine, and Kochanek, Julie Reed, *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores and Outcomes*, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2002.

Miller, Shazia R., Allensworth, Elaine, Kochanek, Julie, Gladden, Robert and Easton, John, *The state of Chicago's high schools*, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2002.

Bryk, Anthony S., and Schneider, Barbara, *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*, Russell Sage, August 2002. (Co-author on Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)

Bryk, Anthony S., Easton, John Q., Gladden, Robert M., and Kochanek, Julie R. *Elementary school size: Its effect on academic productivity in Chicago elementary schools*. Consortium on Chicago School Research. 1999.

Smylie, Mark A., Bilcer, Diane King, Kochanek, Julie, Sconzert, Karin, Shipps, Dorothy and Swyers, Holly, *Getting Started: A First Look at Chicago Annenberg Schools and Networks*, A Report of the Chicago Annenberg Research Project, Consortium on Chicago School Research, June 1998.

Stevenson, David, Kochanek, Julie and Schneider, Barbara, "Making the Transition from High School to College," *The Adolescent Years: Social Influences and Educational Challenges*, NSSE Yearbook, Chicago, Illinois, April 1998.

#### **PRESENTATIONS:**

Invited presenter, "I Like You, I Just Don't Trust You...How to Build Trust for Better Schools," CIDEL 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Academy Retreat, Buffalo, New York, March 2007

Discussant, "The Influence of Teachers and Schools on Student Achievement" AERA Conference, San Francisco, Spring 2006

Invited presenter, "I Want It All: Career and Parenthood in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Women in Leadership Conference, Southern Oregon University, May 2005.

Kochanek, Julie Reed, "Trust in Schools," Social Science Lecture Series, Southern Oregon University, February 2005.

Kochanek, Julie Reed, "Building Trust for Better Schools," CREO Seminar, University of Notre Dame, Fall 2003.

Kochanek, Julie Reed, and Payne, Monique, "The Dissertation Process," CREO Seminar, University of Notre Dame, Fall 2003.

Allensworth, Elaine, Bryk, Anthony S., Gladden, Robert M., Kochanek, Julie R., Luppescu, Stuart, Miller, Shazia R., and Rosenkranz, Todd, "The State of Chicago Public Schools after Eight Years of Mayoral Control," AERA Presidential Invited Session, Chicago, Spring 2003

Bryk, Anthony S., Schneider, Barbara, and Kochanek, Julie Reed, "Relational Trust: A Key Resource for School Improvement," AERA Conference, New Orleans, Spring 2000.

Crumb, Catherine Riegle, and Kochanek, Julie Reed, "One But Not the Other: Gender Differences in Math and Science Course-Taking," ASA Conference, San Francisco, Summer 1998.

Crumb, Catherine Riegle, and Kochanek, Julie Reed, "Understanding the Gender Gap in Math and Science Professions: The Effects of Course-Taking and Values," ASA Conference, Toronto, Summer 1997.

Crumb, Catherine Riegle, and Kochanek, Julie Reed, "The Gender Gap in Math and Science: The Effects of Occupational Values," AERA Conference, San Diego, Spring 1997.

## **REFERENCES**

Leisa Gallagher  
Michigan Department of Education  
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Anne Blankenhorn  
Michigan Senate Majority Office  
Majority Policy Advisor / State Senate  
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**SABRINA W.M. LAINE**

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## **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- Skilled administrator, researcher, and policy analyst.
- More than eight years of experience managing state and federal contracts worth almost \$9 million annually to conduct research, development and the delivery of services to states and districts.
- Oversees \$4 million annually in projects related to educator quality policy research, evaluation, and product development.
- Has worked closely with leadership at the U.S. Department of Education and State Education Agencies in the Midwest and nationally.

## **ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

Ph.D.	Indiana University, Bloomington	2000	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
M.A.	University of Amsterdam, Netherlands	1990	European Law and Economics
B.A.	Indiana University, Bloomington	1989	Political Science and French

## **WORK HISTORY:**

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, IL***

**Chief Program Officer**

**2004–present**

Responsible for managing the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and leading the development of new research and evaluation projects in educator quality. Direct oversight for a staff of 15 and annual budgets totalling \$4 million annually. Contribute to the overall strategic management of the larger organization with more than 150 employees.

**Chief Officer for Research and Development  
and Acting Director NCREL**

**2002–2004**

Led the creation of the Research and Development Group at Learning Point Associates, including the development of business strategies, and managed the regional educational laboratory contract with 45 full-time staff and a budget of almost \$9 million annually.

**Associate Director,**

**2000–2002**

**Internal Coordination and External Relations**

Managed a staff of 20 full-time staff with a \$2.5 million budget, and oversaw all aspects of the work related to state and federal education policy, NCREL publications and conferences, internal and external communications, public relations and government affairs.

**Director, Evaluation and Policy Information Center**

**1998–1999**

Managed a staff of 12 with a \$1.5 million budget and oversaw all aspects of the work related to internal and external evaluation, development of educational products, and policy research.

**Senior Policy Analyst, Evaluation and Policy Information Center** **1996–1998**

Conducted research projects focusing on standards-based reform, international assessments and professional development. Created a variety of print and Web-based vehicles for disseminating NCREL's policy research, and designed networks of key state policymakers.

**Indiana University–Purdue University, Indianapolis, Indiana**  
**Research Associate, Indiana Education Policy Center** **1993–1996**

Contributed to policy research projects on international education, school to work transition, and school finance in Indiana as well as convening state policy meetings for the state superintendent, governor's office, and key legislators.

**Adjunct Faculty, School of Education** **1994–1996**

Taught graduate courses in educational foundations and participated in the development of the first professional development school for the university.

**SAMPLE GRANT-FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS:**

**Quality School leadership Initiative** **2008-2010**

Project Director for new \$287,000 grant through the Fund for the Improvement of Education to develop and disseminate research-based tools to ensure that public schools are led by high-quality school principals.

**Center for Educator Compensation Reform** **2006-2011**

Principal Investigator for Learning Point Associate's participation in the federally funded Technical Assistance Center that serves the 34 Teacher Incentive Fund Grantees. Ten million dollar contract with the Department of Education developed by Learning Point Associates in partnership with three other organizations.

**National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality** **2005-2010**

Led the development of this five-year, \$12 million dollar grant with the United States Department of Education to serve as a national resource to which the regional comprehensive centers, states, and other education stakeholders turn for strengthening the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools.

**North Central Regional Educational Laboratory** **2000–2005**

Coordinated writing for large portions of this five-year, \$42 million dollar contract with the United States Department of Education, Institute for Educational Sciences to conduct applied research and development with a focus on educational data systems, literacy, and technology.

**Adding the Critical Voice: A Dialogue With Practicing Teachers on Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Hard-to-Staff Schools** **2004–2006**

Funded by the Joyce Foundation, this \$140,000 project will focus on developing teacher-driven solutions to recruiting and retaining teachers in at-risk schools in Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee.

### RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

Oliva, O., Mathers, C., & Laine, S. (2008). *Teacher Quality Research and Policy Brief, Improving instruction through effective teacher evaluation: Options for states and districts*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Theobald, N. D., & Laine, S. (2002). The impact of teacher turnover on teacher quality: Findings from four states. In M. Plechi & D. Monk (Eds.), *School finance and teacher quality: Exploring the connections* (Yearbook of the American Educational Finance Association). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Hare, D., Nathan, J., Darland, J., & Laine, S. W. M. (2000). *Teacher shortages in the Midwest: Current trends and future issues*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Laine, S. W. M. (with C. Otto). (2000). *Professional development in education and the private sector: Following the leaders*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Laine, S. W. M., & Ward, J. G. (Eds.) (2000). *Using what we know: A review of the research on implementing class-size reduction initiatives for state and local policymakers*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Laine, S., & Sutton, M. (2000). The politics of multiculturalism: A three country comparison. In C. J. Ovando & P. McLaren (Eds.), *The politics of multiculturalism and bilingual education*. Crawfordsville, IN: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, R.R. Donnelley & Sons.

Ward, J. G., St. John, E. P., & Laine, S. (1999). *State programs for funding teacher professional development*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Ward, J. G., St. John, E. P., & Laine, S. (1999). *State policy on professional development: Rethinking the linkages to student outcomes*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

### SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS:

Laine, S. and Peske, H., *Highly effective teachers: More than highly qualified*, Live National Webcast sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center, Washington, D.C., June 2008.

Laine, S., *Recruiting great teachers for urban Sshools: State policy options*, National Summit on Recruiting, Preparing, and Retaining Quality Urban Teachers, Denver, CO, May 2008.

Laine, S. (Panel Moderator) *What the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality has learned in the first 3 years: Implications for policy on teacher preparation, teacher quality, and teacher distribution*, American Educational Research Association, New York, NY, March 2008.

Laine, S. *Pay to perform: Policy and research perspectives on teacher compensation*, EducationWriters Association, Chicago, IL, April 2008.

Sexton, S., & Laine, S. *Adding the critical voice: Recruiting and retaining teachers in hard-to-staff schools*, Division L, American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, 2006.

*Numerous other presentations made at legislative briefings and conferences organized by state and national organizations for state policymakers, community organizations, parents and teachers.*

## **REFERENCES**

Fran Walter, Contracting Officer  
U.S. Department of Education  
Phone: 202-205-0687  
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The Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce  
Jodie Butler  
Phone: 515-440-3673

Gretchen Crosby Sims  
The Joyce Foundation  
Phone: 312-782-2464  
Email: [gsims@joycefdn.org](mailto:gsims@joycefdn.org)

**JIM LINDSAY, PH.D.**

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**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Expertise in design and implementation of experimental and quasi-experimental research studies.
- Specialization in synthesis of research findings using meta-analytic methodology.
- Consults with clients in designing valid and reliable data collection instruments and surveys.
- Skilled at summarizing complex research findings for a broad audience.
- Skilled project manager.

**ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

Ph.D.	University of Missouri-Columbia	1999	Social Psychology ( <i>minor: methods &amp; statistics</i> )
M.A.	University of Missouri-Columbia	1996	Social Psychology
B.S.	Loyola University Chicago	1992	Psychology

**WORK HISTORY:**

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, IL***

**2008-Present**

**Senior Research Associate, Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory (MREL)**

Oversees implementation of randomized control trials of education interventions, synthesizes research in response to field requests. Designs and carries out studies to address education-related research questions using scientifically sound methodologies. Presents research findings to policymakers and educators.

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, IL***

**2007-2008**

**Research Associate, Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory (MREL)**

Synthesizes research in response to field requests. Designs studies to address education-related research questions using scientifically sound methodologies. Coordinates randomized control trials of education interventions. Presents research findings to policymakers and educators.

***University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN***

**2002-2007**

**Research Associate, Volunteerism Project, Department of Psychology.**

Designed multi-cohort experimental study with multiple waves of data. Created comprehensive multi-measure questionnaires. Recruited and trained workshop facilitators and data collectors. Negotiated participant recruitment agreements with cooperating service organizations. Monitored fidelity of data collection and workshop facilitation procedures. Performed grant-management activities, including yearly progress reports to NIMH, IRB renewals, budgeting and creating expense projections. Wrote research papers for conferences and publication in scientific journals.



**Behavioral Health Concepts, Columbia, MO**

**1999-2001**

**Research Associate.**

Created, implemented, and managed evaluation systems for publicly-funded programs. Analyzed evaluation data and summarized in easily-interpretable formats. Recruited and trained workshop facilitators and data collectors. Trained client staff on systematic data collection techniques. Consulted with program site staff on best practices in service delivery.

**University of Missouri, Columbia, MO**

**1996-1999**

**Graduate Instructor, Department of Psychology**

Served on committee redesigning the department's research methods and statistics curriculum. Created and delivered lectures for Research Methodology course. Created and delivered lectures for Statistics course. Created hands-on small-group laboratory curriculum to accompany Statistics course, including activities and lab-manual.

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- Served on Governor of Missouri's Committee on Community Benchmarking.
- ad hoc reviewer of empirical research reports for *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Elementary School Journal*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Sex Roles*, and *Social Cognition*.

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:**

Snyder, M., Omoto, A. M., & Lindsay, J. J. (2004). Sacrificing time and effort for the good of others: The benefits and costs of volunteerism. In A. G. Miller (Ed.) *The social psychology of good and evil: Understanding our capacity for kindness and cruelty*. (pp. 444-468). New York: Guilford.

Bartholow, B. D., Dill, K. E., Anderson, K. A., & Lindsay, J. J. (2003). The economics of media violence. In I. Sigel (Series Ed.) & D. Gentile (Vol. Ed.), *Media Violence and Children*. (In series: *Advances in Applied Developmental Psychology*). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.

Cooper, H., Jackson, K., Nye, B., & Lindsay, J. J. (2001). A model of homework's influence on the performance evaluations of elementary school students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 69, 181-199.

Cooper, H., Lindsay, J. J., & Nye, B. (2000). Homework in the home: How student, parent, and family differences affect the homework process. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25, 464-487.

Muhlenbruck, L., Cooper, H., Nye, B., & Lindsay, J. J. (2000). Homework and achievement: Explaining the different strengths of relation at the elementary and secondary school levels. *Social Psychology of Education*, 3, 295-317

Lindsay, J. J., & Anderson, C. A. (2000). From antecedent conditions to violent actions: Support for a general affective aggression model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 533-547.

Cooper, H., Valentine, J. C., Nye, B., & Lindsay, J. J. (1999). Relationships between five after-school activities and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91, 1-10.

Cooper, H., Lindsay, J. J., Nye, B., & Greathouse, S. (1998). Relationships between beliefs about homework, the amount of homework assigned and completed, and student achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90, 70-83.

Cooper, H., & Lindsay, J. J. (1997). Research synthesis and meta-analysis. In L. Bickman & D. Rog (Eds.). *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods* (pp. 315-337). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 227-268.

## REFERENCES

Karen Balmer, Executive Director  
Minnesota Board of Teaching  
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Carol Knicker, Ed.D.  
Minnesota Board of Teaching  
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Harris Cooper, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology  
Department of Psychology and Neuroscience  
Duke University  
Phone: 919-660-316, 919-660-5664  
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## **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- Conducted program evaluations for over 5 years. Managed research and evaluation projects, and well versed in program evaluation including conducting formative/summative evaluation and needs assessments, developing logic models, instrument development, data analysis and report writing.
- Strong background in research methodology and design with experience in survey development and data analysis.
- Skilled at working with both quantitative and qualitative data, with experience in methodologies and data analyses within both forms of data.

## **ACADEMIC BACKGROUND**

Ph.D. 2006: Family Studies & Human Development  
The University of Arizona, Tucson, U.S.A.

M.A. 1996: Psychology  
The University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India

B.A. 1994: Psychology  
The University of Kerala, Trivandrum, India

## **WORK HISTORY**

***Learning Point Associates, Washington D.C.***

**Policy Research Associate**

**2008 - present**

Part of the Educator Quality Group at Learning Point Associates and works on various research and evaluation projects looking at educator quality. Current projects include 1) a research study to develop, pilot and field-test a Quality School Leadership Identification procedure that will help school districts select the right principals for their schools; and 2) an evaluation of the Miami Dade County Public Schools use of their Transition to Teach Grant.

***Education Development Center, New York, New York***

**Research Associate**

**2005 - 2008**

Primarily worked on two projects: a New York State applied research study and an international evaluation project. The New York State research study was a longitudinal study about assessing the effectiveness of online professional development on teachers and its impact, if any, on their students. It was an experimental design, with participants randomly assigned to treatment or control conditions. Primary responsibilities included planning and implementing the participant recruitment and group assignment process, instrument development, data collection and management.

The international evaluation project assessed the effectiveness of a large scale professional development program for teachers being implemented in over 30 countries worldwide. Was

responsible for all day-to-day activities of the project including developing survey and interview protocols, coordinating data collection efforts, collecting and analyzing data, writing reports, and acting as a liaison with local evaluators from different countries and supporting them in their evaluations.

Other general responsibilities included center-wide, non-project related tasks such as helping with proposal writing and statistical analyses for other projects.

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- Member of the American Evaluation Association
- Member of the American Educational Research Association
- Member of the International Society for Technology in Education

## **RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

Menon, R., Nguyen, K.D., Nguyen, L.N.T., & Light, D. (2008). *Intel® Teach Program Getting Started Course in Vietnam: Case Study Report*. To be made available at the EDC/CCT website: <http://teachprograms.edc.org>

Light, D., Menon, R., & Shulman, S. (2007). *Training Teachers across a Diversity of Contexts: An analysis of International Evaluation Data on the Intel® Teach Essentials Course, 2006*. Available at the EDC/CCT website: <http://teachprograms.edc.org>

Light, D., Culp, K., Menon, R., & Shulman, S. (2006). Preparing Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom: Current Findings from Evaluations of the Intel Teach to the Future Essentials Course. Available at the EDC/CCT website: <http://teachprograms.edc.org>

Light, D., Culp, K., Menon, R., & Shulman, S. (2006). *Intel® Teach to the Future Essentials Course: Impact survey results for 2005*. Available at the EDC/CCT website: <http://teachprograms.edc.org>

## **RECENT PRESENTATIONS**

Menon, R., & Light, D. (July 2008). *Evaluation tools for professional development programs*. Paper presented at the National Education Computing Conference, San Antonio, USA.

Menon, R., & Light, D. (November 2007). *Designing effective multi-country evaluations: Lessons learned from a large scale teacher training program*. Paper presented at the American Evaluation Association Conference, Baltimore, USA.

Menon, R., & Light, D. (July 2006). *Impact of educational technology policy on change in teacher Practice*. Poster presented at the National Educational Computing Conference, San Diego, USA.

Light, D., Menon, R., & Culp, K. E. (April 2006). *Educational policy and professional development Programs: The role of policy alignment to support changing teacher practices*

*in the United States, India, Brazil, and Korea.* Roundtable session arranged for the American Education Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, USA.

Light, D., & Menon, R. (March 2006). *International Perspectives on Technology Integration and Professional Development.* Roundtable discussion arranged for the Consortium for School Networking Conference, Arlington, USA.

## **REFERENCES**

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Intel Education

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**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- As Director of Iowa Department of Education, worked with school districts and with the Iowa Legislature to develop and implement a new local school district accreditation process that included student performance in accreditation.
- Implemented the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan for Iowa accredited public and nonpublic schools. Combined accountability reporting for 14 different state and federal programs focused on a single set of results and assurances.
- Implemented new statewide standards for teacher education and principal preparation programs that are based on demonstrated performance.
- Oversaw implementation of the first phases of the teacher quality and student performance policy, many elements of which are nationally recognized: consistent statewide performance standards, criteria, and evaluation processes for teachers; comprehensive training for those who will evaluate teachers using the new performance standards.

**ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

Coursework	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	1981-1987	Curriculum and Instruction
Certification	University of Nebraska at Omaha	1973-1974	School Administration and Supervision
M.S.	Drake University	1970-1971	Teaching
B.A.	University of Iowa	1966-1977	Psychology and Sociology

**WORK HISTORY:**

***Learning Point Associates, Naperville, IL***

**Chief Operating Officer and Chief Officer—Professional Services 2006—Present**

Direct and coordinate operation and support functions. Establish and refine organizational policies, goals, objectives, and procedures. Oversee and lead 50-person staff with contracts totaling \$17 million annually. Provide direction, consultation, and other assistance to client state agencies and local school districts for improving education and student performance.

***The Environmental Project, Des Moines, IA***

**Director of Learning 2004—2005**

Leadership for design and implementation of all aspects of the education program for a multi-acre rainforest and aquarium attraction. Coordination for the relationships with the project manager, architects and contractors for design and construction of the \$120 million facility. Owner's lead representative for exhibit and program design.

***Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines, IA***

**Director 1995—2004**

Leadership and supervision over the state system of education which includes the following: 525,000 students in public and private accredited K-12 schools; 106,000 credit students in 15 community colleges; 4,000 employees in 12 area education agencies. Expenditures for this system comprise over 45% of all state government expenditures. Operational leadership and

coordination for all Divisions of the Department of Education including Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation; Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education; Financial and Information Services; and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Served as Executive Officer of the Iowa State Board of Education; Developed long- and short-range plans including budgets, legislative initiatives, and allocation of existing system resources for the Department of Education, the State Board of Education and their constituencies.

***Division of Elementary and Secondary Education***  
***Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines, Iowa***

**Administrator** **1988–1995**

Operational leadership and coordination for five bureaus within the Department of Education including School Administration and Accreditation; Practitioner Preparation and Licensure; Food and Nutrition; Special Education; Instructional Services. Coordination of strategic planning processes for the Department of Education and the State Board of Education.

***Council Bluffs Community Schools, Council Bluffs, Iowa***

**Executive Director of Educational Services** **1983–1988**

Supervision of three secondary principals, seven elementary principals, and two central office administrators. Overall responsibility for instructional programming for 9,800 students. Coordination of long-range planning processes for the district including staffing levels. Management of major projects including: development and implementation of an evaluation system for teachers and administrators; involved in the design and implementation of training for principals and instructional administrators in improving instruction and instructional supervision and leadership; Planned and implemented a successful district wide process with broad community involvement that resulted in the closing of five elementary and two junior high schools; Transition of ninth grade students from junior high to high school centers; Leadership for the development of the district's professional development plan.

***Council Bluffs Community Schools, Council Bluffs, Iowa***

**Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Curriculum Director)** **1980–1983**

Specific responsibility for the management of K-12 district curriculum.

***Council Bluffs Community Schools, Council Bluffs, Iowa***

**Elementary Principal** **1978–1980**

Involved the supervision of 515 students and 37 staff in a preschool through sixth grade setting.

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- President, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2003-2004, Board of Directors, 1998 to 2004
- President, Board of Directors, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999 to 2001
- Treasurer, Education Commission of the States, 1998-1999
- National Advisory Council, Scholastic, Inc., 2000-2001
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- Evaluate externally funded projects for institutions and consortia.
- Collect and analyze education and census data for a variety of institutional, state, and regional projects

1996-2001 Research Associate, NCHEMS

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- State evaluator for WICHE State Scholar Initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education, to encourage high school students to take a rigorous high school course of study, 22 states, 2006 - 2009.
- Evaluator for Tennessee Board of Regents FIPSE project applying National Center for Academic Transformation techniques to developmental education in the system, 2007 - 2009.
- Student learning outcome and general education assessment workshops:
  - Ashford University and Clinton Community College (IA)
  - American Physical Therapy Association Working Group
  - The Pennsylvania State University (January 2009)
  - Winona State University
- With Shelly Potts (Arizona State University). Developed content and structure for a web-based evaluation resource for the federal Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), 2005.
- Evaluations of several projects including four Fund for the FIPSE Learning Anytime Anyplace Partnership (LAAP) projects and three Comprehensive Program (CP) projects:
  - *Oregon Network for Education, ONE*, Oregon University System, CP, 1998-2001.
  - *Creating a Distance Education Alliance*, Oregon State University, CP, 1999-2002.
  - *Beyond the Administrative Core: Creating Web-based Student Services for Online Learners*, Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, LAAP, 1999-2002.

- *Second-Generation University System Distance Education Model via Public/Private Partnerships*, Oregon University System, LAAP, 1999-2002.
- *Accrediting General Education in Distance Learning Degree Programs*, American Academy for Liberal Education, LAAP, 2000-2003.
- *A National Model for Inter-Institutional Postbaccalaureate Distance Education Programs*, Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Association, administered by Kansas State University, LAAP, 2000-2003.
- *Building Organizational Capacity*, National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), CP, 2004-2005.
- Formative and summative evaluation of Department of Education Title III grants to:
  - Valley City State University to create an online Technology Education baccalaureate degree program, 1998-2003.
  - Lewis University to improve retention, develop foreign language capacity, and internationalize their curricula, 2000-2005.
- Evaluation of Federal Department of Education Star Schools grant to Western Governors University, 2001-2006.

## SELECTED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

With James S. Fairweather. "The Evolution of American Scientific Fields: Disciplinary Differences Versus Institutional Isomorphism" in *Cultural Perspectives on Higher Education*, Springer Business+Science Media, J. Välimaa & O.-H. Ylijoki (Eds.), 2008.

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With Others. *Doing Evaluation and Using Evaluation: Measures and Methods for Greatest Impact*. Washington, D.C. Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) Annual Conference, November 2002.

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## **Appendix B**

### **Technical Evidence Relating to Ability to Perform Proposed Services**

- Legislative Brief Presented to Iowa's Department of Education
- Iowa's Teacher Evaluation Policies and Procedures: Comparing District Policies with School Practices
- Creating a 21st Century Policy Framework for Student Learning: A Bold Plan to Support Innovative Changes in Iowa's Education Systems
- Supports and Barriers in the Transfer of Community College Courses to Teacher Education Programs in Iowa

## Legislative Brief Presented to Iowa's Department of Education



**Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest**

# **Legislative Brief Presented to Iowa's Department of Education**

**December 2006**

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# **Legislative Brief: Iowa's 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program's Impact**

## **Policy Priorities**

Recognizing that teachers are a key component in student success, the 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program's goal is to promote high student achievement by (1) redesigning teachers' professional development to improve instruction, (2) providing mentoring and induction programs, (3) developing teacher evaluation processes to build teacher capacity, and (4) retaining teachers. Finally, this legislative brief summarizes the impact of the 2001 policy on student achievement as well as these four teacher quality components.

## **Redesigning Teachers' Professional Development**

Districts play a prominent role engaging in the determination, planning, and implementation of professional development.

According to a comparison of 2001 and 2004 comprehensive school improvement plans from 30 districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status, 2004 comprehensive school improvement plans were more likely to be aligned with the requirements in the 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program. Specifically, the 2004 plans were more likely to address how they would support teachers' efforts to do the following:

- Analyze data.
- Understand theory.
- Observe other teachers and demonstrate practice lessons.
- Use research-based strategies.
- Evaluate career development plans.

## **Suggestions**

While districts' plans were more likely to address the teacher evaluation standards in 2004 compared to 2001, few districts' plans clearly stated how they would support teachers' efforts to do the following:

- Connect students' prior knowledge, life experience, and interests in the instructional process.
- Guide students in goal setting and assessing their own learning.
- Demonstrate professional and ethical conduct as defined by state law and district policy.

If these remain a priority, Iowa may want to investigate further why these criteria often are omitted from districts' plans.

## **Providing Mentoring and Induction Programs**

One of the main policy responses for improving teacher quality and retention is to require that districts support novice teachers through mentoring and induction programs (Glazerman, Senesky, Seftor, & Johnson, 2006).

All districts have an approved mentoring and induction program in place. Based on an analysis of mentoring and induction plans from 25 districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status, all 25 districts require beginning teachers to complete activities by collaborating with a mentor as well as working independently through the program components. The majority describe program activities using basic phrases such as the following:

- Meeting staff and becoming familiar with the school's facilities.
- Reviewing pertinent handbooks, forms, responsibilities, and procedures.
- Supporting novice teachers in meeting Iowa teaching standards.

Few plans outline the specific class periods during which the novice teacher and mentor will meet to complete specific program requirements. Most plans do not explicitly provide guidance for conducting the induction component of the program. It is unclear when the programs are offered and for what duration and intensity.

### **Suggestions**

Further inquiry may include the following:

- Requesting that districts submit updated mentoring and induction plans with additional detail about their mentoring and induction programs' components.
- Requesting that districts submit evaluation results from their mentoring and induction programs from 2001–02 to 2005–06.
- Creating a statewide uniform system that measures the impact of the program on teachers.

These recommendations should help increase the knowledge base of practice within teacher mentoring and induction, which in turn should benefit the design and modification of existing programs.

## **Developing Teacher Evaluation Processes**

Documentation of teacher evaluation policies and practices is one of the crucial steps toward better understanding how districts and schools try to affect teaching practice and, ultimately, student achievement (NGA Center for Best Practices, 2002).

Teacher evaluation policy documents were collected from 22 districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status.



More than half of the districts' policies referred the following aspects of their teacher evaluation procedures:

- Time frame for conducting the evaluation (e.g., months during the school year).
- Standard evaluation form to be used by the evaluator (e.g., matrix).
- Method of evaluation (e.g., observation, portfolio).

Less than half of the districts' policies detailed the following:

- Persons responsible for the evaluation (e.g., principal).
- Documentation communicating the evaluation policy to teachers (e.g., manual).
- Way in which the district would use the evaluation results (e.g., inform professional development opportunities).

According to interviews with 10 principals from districts that varied in size, locale, and poverty status, most principals' reports were in agreement with teacher evaluation policies prescribed by the district. It should be noted that where there is not clear agreement between school practices and district policies, it does not imply disagreement. In many cases, districts do not have comprehensive written policies in place for addressing the methods of evaluation, specifying the frequency of evaluation, or determining the amount of training to be received by evaluators. Iowa may want to consider further inquiry into these aspects of districts' evaluation policies.

## **Suggestions**

As with mentoring, it would be worthwhile to better understand teacher evaluation processes in place within schools and districts across Iowa. Although many formal plans provided some detail regarding evaluation practices, many possibly important design details were absent from the majority of the plans. Understanding how and why teacher evaluation leads to better teaching potentially can contribute to improved student performance.

## **Retaining Teachers**

According to the data provided by the Iowa Department of Education, the retention rates appear to be increasing over time, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Teacher Retention Percentages**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Cohort 1 (New in 2000)</b>	<b>Cohort 2 (New in 2001)</b>	<b>Cohort 3 (New in 2002)</b>	<b>Cohort 4 (New in 2003)</b>	<b>Cohort 5 (New in 2004)</b>	<b>Cohort 6 (New in 2005)</b>
2000 (% retained)	1,810 (100%)					
2001 (% retained)	1,574 (87%)	1,614 (100%)				
2002 (% retained)	1,424 (79%)	1,407 (87%)	1,269 (100%)			
2003 (% retained)	1,339 (74%)	1,285 (80%)	1,131 (89%)	1,432 (100%)		
2004 (% retained)	1,273 (70%)	1,216 (75%)	1,033 (81%)	1,295 (90%)	1,512 (100%)	
2005 (% retained)	1,221 (68%)	1,162 (72%)	975 (77%)	1,200 (84%)	1,391 (92%)	To be determined

In addition to the increase in teacher retention, there appears to be the start of an upswing (after 2002) in the number of new teachers being hired in Iowa.

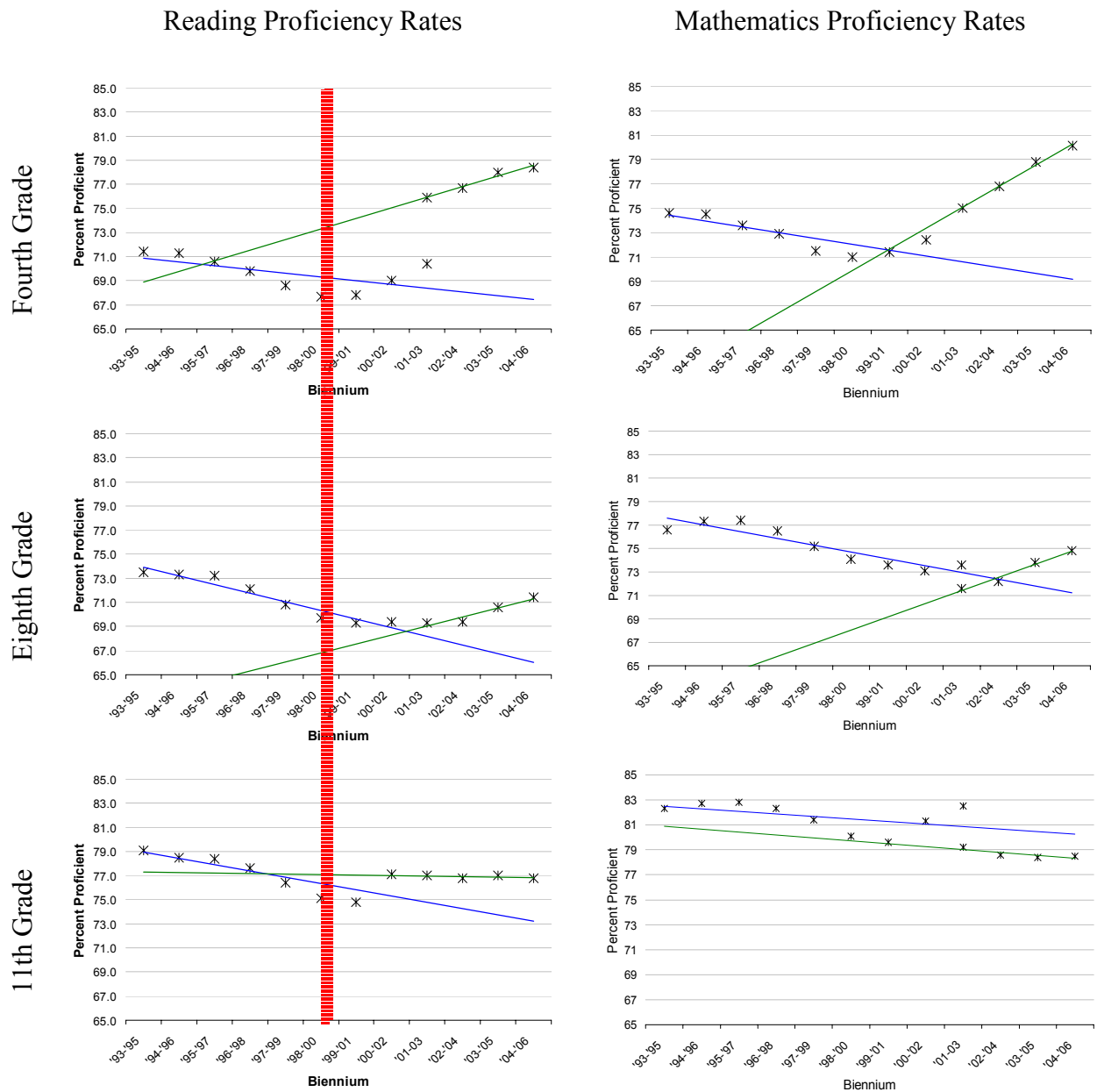
## **Promoting Student Achievement**

Using Iowa's Condition of Education reports, students' reading and mathematics proficiency rates from 4th, 8th, and 11th grade are displayed in Figure 1. The red vertical lines represent the passage of the 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality legislation.

With the exception of 11th-grade mathematics performance, students' reading and mathematics scores are improving. A close examination of the graphs suggests that the upward swing in achievement began to occur prior to the implementation of the law and continues to increase in most grades.

The variation in the long-term performance for fourth-grade reading as well as 8th- and 11th-grade mathematics comes with the shift to the 2000 norms. Because the performance of Iowa students shifted upward with respect to the national cohort, particularly the fourth-grade reading scores, the broken trend line is shown to not take advantage of the shift.

**Figure 1. Students' Reading and Mathematics Proficiency Rates (1993–2006)**



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## Iowa's Teacher Evaluation Policies and Procedures: Comparing District Policies with School Practices



**Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest**

# **Iowa's Teacher Evaluation Policies and Procedures: Comparing District Policies with School Practices**

**December 2006**

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## **REL Midwest**

REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates—serving the seven states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin—provides policymakers and practitioners with resources based on the highest quality evidence as defined by scientifically valid research principles.

REL Midwest’s work includes short-term, fast-response applied research and development projects based on annual needs-sensing data as well as studies conducted in a five-year period using randomized controlled trials.

This is the fifth consecutive federal contract Learning Point Associates has been awarded to operate the Midwest region’s educational laboratory.

## **Acknowledgments**

REL Midwest would like to recognize the National Organization for Research at the University of Chicago (NORC) for its contribution to this report. Its review of the literature as well as the collection and analysis of districts' teacher evaluation policies and procedures was critical to the completion of this report.



## Teacher Evaluation Policies and Procedures

Popular opinion and evidence-based research strongly suggest that teacher quality is critical and central to the success of the educational system. In fact, teacher quality is recognized to be one of the most influential factors of student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1997). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has sought to affect teacher quality directly by requiring that all teachers must be highly qualified and indirectly by requiring the use of high-stakes testing of students in Grades 3–12. But while NCLB tells districts who can teach and for which outcomes teachers should strive, it is silent on what the teachers should do in their classrooms. Definitions of appropriate teaching practices and how to monitor and evaluate their implementation instead are left up to the local districts, schools, and the teachers themselves. Despite the logical connection between how organizations evaluate employees and the employees' actual work behavior, relatively little is known to date about how districts define and organize the task of teacher evaluation. This study seeks to redress this lack of information by conducting a systematic study of teacher evaluation practices in a representative sample of Iowa districts. Documentation of teacher evaluation policies and practices is one of the crucial steps toward better understanding how districts and schools try to affect teaching practice and, ultimately, student achievement (NGA Center for Best Practices, 2002).

### Iowa's Teacher Evaluation Policies and Procedures

Iowa requires districts to conduct teacher evaluations. According to the 2001 Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program, teacher performance shall be reviewed annually by a certified evaluator for the purposes of assisting teachers in making continuous improvement. The Iowa teaching standards are to inform the development of districts' teacher evaluation criteria.

The purpose of this study is to describe districts' teacher evaluation policies and procedures as well as examine the link between district policies and school practice. The results highlight the aspects of the legislation are reflected in district policies as well as those that are being implemented at the school level.

### Methodology

**Sample Design.** This study utilized a stratified cluster sample design to select school districts in Iowa. The data file from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) contained Iowa's 370 total public school districts in Iowa district listings and is part of the NCES CCD. A representative sample of 31 Iowa districts was selected for this study. The districts in this sample were selected with probabilities proportionate to the state across each stratum. Districts were stratified by district locale (i.e., urban, suburban, rural), district size (i.e., 0–10 schools, 11–20 schools, >20 schools), percentage of students in the district who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (i.e., ≤40 percent, >40 percent), and percentage of minority students (i.e., ≤40 percent, >40 percent). Of the 370 total public school districts in Iowa, three had at least 40 percent minority students. None of these three districts were included in our sample.

**Rationale.** This sampling technique allows for minimum sample sizes without compromising the overall internal validity of the study. Randomly selecting districts within strata minimizes selection bias.

## Data Collection

A letter—endorsed by Iowa Department of Education—describing the study and requesting districts’ teacher evaluation documents was mailed to each district (see Appendix). NORC staff members followed up with districts that did not submit any documents, requesting that they either e-mail or use the FedEx envelopes to submit their documents. The letters and follow-up prompting yielded a response rate of 71 percent (22 districts). The districts’ demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. District Demographics**

Characteristics	Respondents (N=22)	Nonrespondents (N=9)	Difference (%)
<b>Locale</b>			
Urban	1 (4.5%)	1 (11.1%)	6.6%
Suburban	6 (27.3%)	1 (11.1%)	-16.2%
Rural	15 (68.2%)	7 (77.8%)	9.6
Total	22 (100%)	9 (100%)	N/A
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>			
Less than 40 percent eligible	19 (86.4%)	6 (66.7%)	-19.7%
Greater than 40 percent eligible	3 (13.6%)	3 (33.3%)	19.7%
Total	22 (100%)	9 (100%)	N/A

## Data Analysis

Districts’ teacher evaluation documents were examined to answer questions about (1) policy statements, (2) procedures for teacher evaluation, (3) criteria used to evaluate, and (4) description of the training procedures for those conducting the evaluation. A qualitative analysis software (NVivo 7) was used to store, code, and analyze coded documents. Specifically, the documents were coded to answer the following questions.

## Policy Statements

- What types of formal details are specified in the policy?
  - Who should conduct the teacher evaluation in the district?
  - When should the evaluation be conducted?
  - How often should the evaluation be conducted?
  - What evaluation tools should be used?
  - Do the recommended practices and processes for evaluation differ for teachers in different subject or topic areas (e.g., mathematics, language arts, special education, English language learners)? If so, how?

## Procedures

- How are schools and teachers informed of the policy?
- What methods of evaluation are suggested or required (e.g., observations, peer ratings, student achievement data, portfolio assessment)?
- How are evaluation results compiled and reported (e.g., district, school, or teacher summaries; are these summative reports of evaluation results)?
- How are evaluation results used in the school system (e.g., inform professional development, tenure, hiring or firing, pay or salary bonuses, other rewards or punishments)?
- What consequences are in place for evaluators who violate procedure?
- What formal grievance procedures are in place for teachers?

## Criteria

- What evaluation criteria are included as part of the evaluation?
  - Lesson plans
  - Classroom management
  - Learning environment
  - Curriculum implementation and instruction
  - Student performance
  - Professional responsibilities (e.g., parent relationships, participants in schoolwide activities)
- What resources are used as references to inform district and school evaluation practice?

## Training

- What training is required of evaluators?

## Findings

Tabulated in Tables 2–11 are the frequencies (in counts and percentages) of the data related to (1) teacher evaluation policy statements, (2) evaluation procedures, (3) evaluation criteria, and (4) training for evaluators. Included in the tables are frequencies for all the districts, frequencies by district locale (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural) and frequencies by free or reduced-price lunch qualifications (i.e., less than and greater than 40 percent free or reduced-price lunch).

**Table 2. Person Responsible for Conducting Teacher Evaluations**

Characteristics	Administrator or Principal	Nonspecified Supervisor	Nonspecified Professional Educator	Unspecified
<b>Locale</b>				
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	4 (18%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	12 (55%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	17 (78%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>				
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	16 (73%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	17 (78%)

Out of the 22 districts in the sample, five (23 percent) referenced the individual responsible for conducting teacher evaluations (see Table 2). Three (14 percent) stated that a board member, principal, or vice principal conducts the evaluations. These documents were coded as *administrator or principal*. One district (5 percent) did not specify the supervisor’s position; rather, the policy document stated that the “school administrators conduct the evaluations and there are no quality assurance measures in place.” One district (5 percent) stated that a *nonspecified professional educator* conducts the evaluations. Seventeen (78 percent) of the district documents did not specify the person responsible for conducting the interviews.

**Table 3. Time Frame for Conducting Teacher Evaluations**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Sept– Oct</b>	<b>Nov– Dec</b>	<b>Jan– Feb</b>	<b>Mar– Apr</b>	<b>May– June</b>
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	3 (14%)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	2 (9%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)	2 (9%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	5 (23%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)	2 (9%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)

The majority of the districts (59 percent) either conduct their evaluations at the beginning of the school year (September and October) or in the spring (March and April). Urban and suburban districts in the sample conduct evaluations in the fall as well as the spring. Seven districts (32 percent) conduct teacher evaluations between March and April, six districts (27 percent) conduct evaluations between September and October, three (14 percent) carryout evaluations between November and December, two (9 percent) conduct evaluations between January and February, and another two (9 percent) between May and June. Four rural districts did not specify a timeframe. Some districts evaluate teachers during more than one time frame each year. See Table 3 for a breakdown of districts' evaluation time frames.

**Table 4. Frequency of Evaluations**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>Less than Annually</b>	<b>Repeated Occurrence but frequency not Specified</b>	<b>Not Mentioned</b>
<b>Locale</b>				
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	10 (45%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	5 (23%)	1 (5%)	5 (23%)	11 (50%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>				
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	4 (8%)	0 (1%)	4 (18%)	11 (50%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	5 (23%)	1 (5%)	5 (23%)	11 (50%)

The frequencies with which the evaluations are conducted are summarized in Table 4. Five districts (23 percent) state that teachers are evaluated annually. One district (5 percent) requires teachers to be evaluated less frequently. Another five districts (23 percent) state that evaluations are conducted frequently, but they did not specify how often. Finally, eleven districts (50 percent) did not mention the number of times teachers are evaluated.

**Table 5. Evaluation Tools and Differences per Student Population**

Characteristics	Tools: Standard Forms	No Standard Form Indicated
<b>Locale</b>		
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	4 (18%)	1 (5%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	12 (55%)	4 (18%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	16 (73%)	6 (27%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>		
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	15 (68%)	4 (18%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	16 (73%)	6 (27%)

The forms used by evaluators also were analyzed. A *standard form* refers to an evaluation instrument (e.g., rating or scoring matrixes) uniformly used by all schools in the district. The form either is developed by the school or district or is developed by an institution outside the district. Out of the 22 districts, 16 (73 percent) of the policy documents stated that schools are required to use a standard form for evaluating teachers. Six districts did not indicate whether they use a standard form to evaluate teachers (see Table 5).

**Table 6. Policy Communication**

Characteristics	Communication			
	Contracts	Employee Handbook	Inservice Training	Other
<b>Locale</b>				
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (14%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	3 (14%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>				
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	6 (27%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)

As displayed in Table 6, 10 (46 percent) of the 22 districts define how evaluation policies are communicated to the teachers. District documents stating that staff members are informed of teacher evaluation policies but do not specify how teachers are informed (e.g., no specific descriptions of using contracts, using employee handbook or manuals, using in-service training, or using teacher union or teacher association literature to communicate the district's teacher evaluation policies) were coded as *other*. For example, the following excerpt was coded as *other* because it does not reference a tangible resource to which the new teacher may refer: "Within two weeks of employment, [the] building principal will acquaint each teacher with the evaluation procedures, state standards, school criteria for adequate performance, the instrument to be used in evaluation, and the supervisors who will conduct the observations."

One district (5 percent) communicates the policy through the teacher contract, 1 (5 percent) uses an employee handbook, 2 districts (9 percent) communicate the policy via in-service training, and 6 districts (27 percent) relay the policy through other methods of communication.



**Table 7. Evaluation Methods**

Characteristics	Observations			Portfolio Analysis	Other
	Scheduled	Unscheduled	Other		
Locale					
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	4 (18%)	3 (14%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	4 (18%)	3 (14%)	5 (23%)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)
Characteristics	Observations			Portfolio Analysis	Other
	Scheduled	Unscheduled	Other		
Free or reduced-price lunch					
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	3 (14%)	3 (14%)	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	4 (18%)	3 (14%)	5 (23%)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)

Observations were the most common method of evaluation stated in the districts' policy documents. Of the 12 districts (55 percent) using observations, four (18 percent) stated that the evaluator would observe the teacher on a scheduled classroom visit while three (14 percent) require evaluations to be unscheduled and five (23 percent) did not specify whether the observations are scheduled or spontaneous. Six districts (27 percent) use portfolio analyses for their evaluations. One suburban district uses multiple evaluation methods. District documents that did not specify what evaluation methods or procedures are used were coded as *other*. For example, one document stated that the "evaluation procedures and criteria are the same for all certified staff," however, it did not specify the methods used to evaluate the staff and therefore was coded as *other*. For a summary of the evaluation methods, see Table 7. The two rural districts that did not specify an evaluation method were excluded from this table.

**Table 8. Reporting and Using Evaluation Results**

Characteristics	Reporting Results			Using Results	
	Formative Report	Summative Report	Teacher Summaries	Inform Professional Development	Hiring/Firing
<b>Locale</b>					
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	6 (27%)	1 (5%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	9 (41%)	1 (5%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>					
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (36%)	1 (5%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	9 (41%)	1 (5%)

Table 8 summarizes how evaluations are reported to teachers. Reports that were not identified as summative or formative were labeled *teacher summaries*. The following section from one of the districts' policy documents further defines the *teacher summaries* category:

A private conference shall be held between the employee and his/her Principal within one (1) week of the formal classroom observation unless either party requests an extension to a later date, and in any event such conference shall be held within two (2) weeks of such observation. A signed, written summary will be provided to the employee.

Out of the 22 districts' policies, five (23 percent) stated how evaluation results are reported. One district (5 percent) uses a formative report, two districts (9 percent) use summative reports, and two districts (9 percent) report their evaluation results in *teacher summaries*.

Ten (45 percent) of the districts further defined how the evaluation results are used. Nine districts (41 percent) require the evaluation results to inform professional development. One district (5 percent) uses the evaluation to determine whether to hire or fire teachers. For a breakdown of the types of evaluation reports and how districts use the evaluation results, see Table 8.

**Table 9. Grievance Procedures**

Characteristics	Addenda to Evaluation	Request Another Evaluation	Other
<b>Locale</b>			
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	5 (23%)	0 (0%)	4 (18%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	6 (27%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>			
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	6 (27%)	0 (0%)	4 (18%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	6 (27%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)

Eleven districts (50 percent) reference grievance procedures in their policies (see Table 9). Six districts (27 percent) require an addendum to the evaluation, one (5 percent) requires teachers to request another evaluation, and four (18 percent) refer to the grievance procedures; however, they do not specify the process and therefore were coded as *other*. For example, one district's policy states the following:

If an employee receives a rating of *does not meet the standard* on their formal written evaluation, then such rating can be grieved. The grievance shall be processed through the formal grievance procedures with the date of occurrence of the event being the date of receipt of the evaluation by the employee. The arbitrator's review will be limited to whether the rating or statement in question is arbitrary, capricious or without basis in fact. The arbitrator's remedy shall be limited to correcting the rating or statements contained in the evaluation. Determination that an employee is in need of intensive assistance and the implementation of intensive assistance is not subject to the grievance procedure."

**Table 10. Evaluation Criteria**

Characteristics	Evaluation Criteria		
	Student Performance	State Standards	Other
<b>Locale</b>			
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	0 (0%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>			
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)

The evaluation criteria used by districts is displayed in Table 10. Only 10 districts (45 percent) defined the criteria used for evaluating teachers. Of these, six (27 percent) used state standards, three (14 percent) used student performance and two (9 percent) specified that evaluation criteria are formalized, but these districts did not specify how the criteria are developed and therefore were coded as *other*. For example, one policy document stated that “the criteria for evaluation shall be agreed upon by the board and submitted in writing to every licensed employee.”

**Table 11. Evaluator Training Requirements**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Professional Nondistrict Training</b>
<b>Locale</b>	
Urban ( <i>n</i> =1)	0 (0%)
Suburban ( <i>n</i> =5)	1 (5%)
Rural ( <i>n</i> =16)	2 (9%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	3 (14%)
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Professional Nondistrict Training</b>
<b>Free or reduced-price lunch</b>	
Less than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =19)	3 (14%)
Greater than 40 percent eligible ( <i>n</i> =3)	0 (0%)
Total ( <i>N</i> =22)	3 (14%)

Only three (14 percent) of the 22 districts' documents specified that evaluators are required to complete a professional training (see Table 11).

### Summary

The systematic study of teacher evaluation policies and procedures suggests that there are some aspects of teacher evaluation that generally are specified across the districts in the sample, some that are stated clearly in half of the districts and others that are rarely mentioned.

- More than 50 percent of the districts' policies referred the following aspects of their teacher evaluation procedures:
  - Time frame for conducting the evaluation (e.g., months during the school year).
  - Standard evaluation form to be used by the evaluator (e.g., matrix).
  - Method of evaluation (e.g., observation, portfolio).
- Half of the districts referenced the following:
  - Frequency of the evaluations (e.g., annually).
  - Grievance procedures (e.g., request another evaluation).
  - Evaluation criteria (e.g., state standards).
- Less than half of the districts detailed the following:

- Persons responsible for the evaluation (e.g., principal).
- Differentiation of evaluations according to student subpopulations (e.g., grade level).
- Documentation communicating the evaluation policy to teachers (e.g., manual).
- Type of report shared with the teacher upon completion of the evaluation (e.g., summative).
- Way in which the district would use the evaluation results (e.g., inform professional development opportunities).
- Training required for evaluators.

This study provides a descriptive summary of the level of detail available in districts' teacher evaluation policies and procedures. While in many cases the policies did not address all of the research questions, there are some areas in which almost all of the districts provide requirements to their schools. In the following section, the relationship between district policy and school practices is examined.

## **Teacher Evaluation Practices**

The relationship between the 2001 legislative requirements regarding teacher evaluations and the districts' policies suggests that district personnel may be somewhat informed of the legislative requirements and use them as a guide for crafting their evaluations. Interviews with district principals were conducted to examine reported teacher evaluation practices. The second half of this report provides an overview and summary of the interviews as well as a comparison of districts' policies and procedures and principals' reported practices.

## **Sampling Methodology for Identifying Principals**

A sample of schools from 31 districts (which previously were selected by REL Midwest to be representative of districts in the state) was selected to participate in 15-minute telephone interviews that focused on school-level teacher evaluation practices. One school from each district was chosen randomly from a pool of schools that most closely reflected district demographics in terms of minority school enrollment and free or reduced-price lunch eligibility. Sampling also took into consideration the distribution of school types (e.g., elementary, middle or junior high, high) across Iowa and attempted to replicate the distribution as much as possible.

During the sampling process, two schools had to be dropped from the study because there was only one school in the district and the principal was also the superintendent, therefore anonymity was compromised. As the interview process proceeded, six schools declined participation, further reducing the sample to 23 schools. In addition, the time constraints of the study made it impossible to contact all potential participants. As such, three principals were not interviewed. As a result, the final sample size of the study was 20 schools.

## Interview Methodology

Superintendents of the sample districts were sent a letter on behalf of the Iowa Department of Education Director that briefly explained the Iowa Teacher Evaluation Study. An e-mail from the project coordinator at Learning Point Associates followed, briefly describing the study as well as the interview process with principals. The e-mail also requested the superintendents' cooperation in relaying the information to all principals in the districts. Principals of the randomly selected schools then were called to arrange an interview. Interviews were conducted by telephone by Learning Point Associates researchers. Questions addressed evaluation practices in the school, the tools or protocols used, and other items related to teacher evaluation. Interviews predominantly comprised closed-ended questions, took approximately 15 minutes to complete, and occurred between November 20 and December 8, 2006. If permitted by the principal, interviews also were recorded to ensure accuracy. The interview sample is summarized in Table 12.

**Table 12. Interview Sample**

<b>Principals</b>	<b>Selected</b>	<b>Participated</b>
Elementary	17	8
Middle School	6	4
High School	8	8
Total	31	20

## Interview Findings

Principals were asked about how they use the results of teacher evaluations as well as whether training was provided for those who conducted observations. Respondents reported that teacher evaluations were used to guide decisions about the following:

- Retention of teachers (85 percent)
- Tenure (50 percent)
- Professional development (90 percent)

In addition, 95 percent of the respondents indicated that the staff members conducting the evaluations were trained formally. One respondent noted that a staff member who assists with the evaluations may not have been trained formally, but the principal who is primarily responsible for these evaluations has been.

## Evaluation Methods Used

Respondents were asked about the evaluation methods used in their schools. As displayed in Table 13, 100 percent of the respondents conducted observations to evaluate teachers, while 80 percent used portfolio assessments. The interview also revealed that 15 percent of the respondents used student achievement data and an additional 5 percent used peer review ratings.

**Table 23. Methods of Teacher Evaluation**

<b>N=20</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Observations	100%
Portfolio assessments	80%
Student achievement data	15%
Peer review ratings	5%

When asked whether there were any other methods used, 12 (60 percent) provided additional information. Six (50 percent) stated that the 3-Minute Classroom Walk-Through by Carolyn Downey, Ph.D., was used frequently for part of their evaluation process. This is an observation process designed to allow the administrator to obtain snapshots of the teaching-learning dynamic within the classroom. In addition, two principals (17 percent) discussed their use of the Iowa state standards as a guide when evaluating teachers.

One respondent described meeting with a small group of students in an informal manner four times per year to discuss their views of classes. The respondent was very clear in expressing that this method was not created for students to negatively discuss teachers but rather to gain insight regarding teacher effectiveness from the student perspective.

**Observations.** In terms of frequency, the majority of the respondents (60 percent) reported formally observing career teachers once every three years, as outlined in the district policy. Six (30 percent) reported formally observing once or twice per year. There were two respondents (10 percent) who observed the career teachers four or more times per year. Beginning teachers were reportedly observed two times per year by 35 percent of the respondents. There were four respondents (20 percent) who formally observed beginning teachers three times per year while 45 percent reported observing beginning teachers four or more times per year.

Respondents were asked about the observation tool used to conduct teacher evaluations. As shown in Table 14, 95 percent expressed the use of a common observation tool that is used systematically across all teachers. In addition, 84 percent of the principals used a tool that was prescribed by the district. Another 68 percent used the same observation tool for both beginning and career teachers.



**Table 14. Use of Observations**

<b>N=20</b>	<b>Beginning Teachers</b>	<b>Career Teachers</b>
Frequency of observations for teachers (per year).	2–4	<1–4
Median	3	2
<b>Description of Tool</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you have a common observation tool that is used systematically across teachers?	95%	5%
Is the assessment tool one that was prescribed by the district?	84%	16%
Is it the same tool for beginning and career teachers?	68%	32%

One principal developed a system that, he says, “gathers more information than the district’s pre and post.” He contends that information regarding classroom management, physical space, teacher proximity, and student response to teacher are captured using his method rather than the standard district observation tool.

**Portfolio Assessments.** Respondents were asked if they used portfolio assessments as a part of the teacher evaluation process. As shown in Table 15, 62 percent expressed the use of a common tool systematically across all teachers. Of those, 90 percent used the same tool for both beginning and career teachers. In addition, 80 percent used a tool that was prescribed by the district.

**Table 15. Use of Portfolio Assessments**

<b>N=20</b>	<b>Beginning Teachers</b>	<b>Career Teachers</b>
Frequency of assessments for teachers (per year).	<1–4	≤1
Median	2	<1
<b>Description of Tool</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you have a common observation tool that is used systematically across teachers?	62%	37%
Is the assessment tool one that was prescribed by the district?	80%	10%
If yes, is it the same tool for beginning and career teachers?	90%	10%

In one instance, the district did not require the completion of portfolios by teachers. The principal implemented the use of portfolios as an added aid for both beginning and career teachers.

For 67 percent of the respondents, portfolio assessments were completed once every three years for career teachers, in accordance to the district evaluation process. An additional 33 percent evaluated their career teachers annually. For beginning teachers, 25 percent were assessed every two years while 63 percent were assessed one to two times per year. In addition, two respondents indicated that portfolios are assessed four or more times per year for beginning teachers.

**Student Achievement Data and Peer Review.** As presented previously in Table 13, three respondents (15 percent) used student achievement data to evaluate teachers. There was one respondent who used peer review data. For that respondent, the tool was prescribed by the district and was used systematically across both beginning and career teachers twice per year.

### **District Evaluation Policy**

A district policy was reported to be in place regarding teacher evaluation by all 20 respondents. Similarly, 100 percent reported learning about the policy through the master contract or the employee handbook received upon hire. As shown in Table 16, 95 percent expressed that the district policy serves their school well.

The monitoring of the implementation of the teacher evaluation process by the district was reported by 75 percent of the respondents. Of those with a district monitoring system in place, 94 percent reported that information is shared in administrative or supervisory meetings. One respondent was new to the district and not completely familiar with the monitoring process.

**Table 16. District Policy Service and Implementation**

<b>N=20</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Is there a district policy regarding teacher evaluation?	100%
Does it seem to be serving your school well?	94%
Does your school district monitor the implementation of your teacher evaluation process?	75%

### **Comparison of District Policies and School Practice**

To determine whether schools were following their districts' written teacher evaluation policies, the results from interviews with one randomly selected principal in each district were compared to the written district policies, plans, or procedures. Ten districts that had a completed principal interview and submitted written teacher evaluation policies were included in the analysis.

The analysis focused on the evaluation methods and procedures that were both included in the principal interview and referred to in the majority of district policies examined. Other items addressed in the principal interview but not mentioned in district policy, such as the use of less common methods of evaluation (peer review ratings and student achievement data) and the impact of teacher evaluation on decisions about tenure and retention, were not included in the analysis. Specifically, the comparison analyzed the following:

- Common evaluation methods used for both beginning and career teachers.
- Frequency of using each evaluation method with both beginning and career teachers.
- Use of trained evaluators.
- District monitoring of the teacher evaluation process.

The results are summarized in Table 17.

**Table 17. Percent of Agreement between Written District Policies and School Practice Regarding Teacher Evaluation (N=10)**

Teacher Evaluation Components	Percent in Agreement
Use of formal observations	80% (n=10)
• Frequency of use for beginning teachers	75% (n=8)
• Frequency of use for career teachers	88% (n=8)
Use of portfolio assessments	50% (n=10)
• Frequency of use for beginning teachers	60% (n=5)
• Frequency of use for career teachers	80% (n=5)
Use of trained evaluators	50% (n=10)
District monitors teacher evaluation process	50% (n=10)

Overall, eight of the 10 schools and districts agreed that they used observations (80 percent), with six of these (75 percent) agreeing on the frequency of observations for beginning teachers and seven (88 percent) agreeing on the frequency of observations for career teachers.

For the five districts in which there was agreement on the use of portfolio assessments to evaluate teachers, three (60 percent) agreed on the frequency in which the portfolios of beginning teachers are assessed and four (80 percent) agreed on the frequency of portfolio assessments for career teachers.

In terms of using trained evaluators to conduct teacher evaluations, there was agreement in half of the schools and districts. Similarly, in only half of the cases was there agreement on district monitoring of teacher evaluation at the school level.

## Conclusion

It should be noted that where there is not clear agreement between school practices and district policies, it does not imply disagreement. In many cases, districts do not have comprehensive written policies in place for addressing the methods of evaluation, specifying the frequency of evaluation, and/or determining the amount of training to be received by evaluators. District policy often is a few lines stating that teacher evaluation is an ongoing process conducted by the principal. Thus it is difficult to conclude with any precision the overall level of agreement or disagreement between school practice and district policies.

When asked during interviews about the tools used to evaluate teachers, principals often indicated that they use instruments prescribed by the district. Upon examination of district documents, it is clear that the evaluation forms, guidelines, and rubrics referred to by principals and used in schools for teacher evaluation firmly are based on the eight Iowa Teaching Standards.

Thus although there may be some ambiguity regarding the methods and frequency associated with teacher evaluations, it is clear that schools are basing their evaluations on the standards Iowa teachers are expected to uphold.

## References

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## Appendix

### Sample Letter Mailed to Districts

September 2006

Dear Superintendent,

Our long-time research partner REL Midwest at Learning Point Associates (previously known as NCREL) is conducting a study of teacher evaluation practices within Iowa. The study will describe variation in teacher evaluation policies and procedures. Ultimately, data from the study will help REL Midwest offer guidance in this area to better support teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Your district was selected based on a random sample designed to represent all school districts in the state. **REL Midwest will review your district's website prior to making a personal contact.** From your website, they will attempt to identify the proper person to contact and any available information in the following four areas of interest:

1. The policy statement (who is to be evaluated by whom for what purpose and with what consequences).
2. The procedures for teacher evaluation (how the evaluation is to be conducted).
3. The tools in use (forms, checklists, logs, etc.).
4. A description of the training for those conducting the evaluation.

REL Midwest estimates that your participation in this study will involve a fifteen-minute phone call with one possible follow-up for clarification. While we value your cooperation please know that your participation is voluntary.

If you have any questions, or if you would prefer to make the initial contact with REL Midwest, please feel free to contact one of the project managers: Chris Brandt at [chris.brandt@learningpt.org](mailto:chris.brandt@learningpt.org), (630) 649-6649, or Carrie Mathers at [carrie.mathers@learningpt.org](mailto:carrie.mathers@learningpt.org), (630) 649-6647. Thank you.

Best Regards,

**Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policy Framework for Student Learning: A Bold Plan  
to Support Innovative Changes in Iowa's Education Systems**

# **Creating a 21st Century Policy Framework for Student Learning: A Bold Plan to Support Innovative Changes in Iowa's Education Systems**

**December 2006**

This document was prepared exclusively for the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce (ITW) and was discussed at the ITW Board of Directors meeting on December 12, 2006. The ITW Board of Directors used the information contained in this report to develop its final set of recommendations to be submitted to the Iowa Legislature in January 2007. The document fulfills one of the deliverables contractually guaranteed by Learning Point Associates to the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce.



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## **About Learning Point Associates**

Learning Point Associates is a nonprofit educational organization with more than 20 years of direct experience working with and for educators and policymakers to transform education systems and student learning. Our vision is an education system that works for all learners, and our mission is to deliver the knowledge, strategies, and results to help educators make research-based decisions that produce sustained improvement.

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is an education system that works for all learners.

### **Our Mission**

We deliver the knowledge, strategies, and results to help educators and policymakers make research-based decisions that produce sustained educational improvements.

### **Our Core Competencies**

In response to identified client needs, Learning Point Associates offers comprehensive services in the areas of evaluation, policy, professional services, and research to K–16 education stakeholders at the school, district, state, regional, and national levels. Competencies include comprehensive school improvement, teacher quality, afterschool programming, data tools for school improvement, and literacy.

### **Our Expertise**

We are known for the following work we do:

- Designing and conducting client-centered evaluations.
- Analyzing and synthesizing education policy trends and practices.
- Delivering high-quality professional services directly to our clients.
- Conducting rigorous and relevant education research and evaluation.

Our work consistently builds the capacity of our clients to be good consumers, practitioners, and advocates for educational excellence.

Our goal is to be client centered, responsive to needs, sensitive to constraints, and driven to high-quality results. Our professional staff of 150 continues to grow as our work expands both nationally and internationally with offices in Naperville, Illinois; Chicago; and Washington, D.C.

Our goal is to build the capacity of the clients we serve to be good consumers, practitioners, and advocates for educational excellence.

## Acknowledgements

Learning Point Associates is indebted to all Iowans who dedicated their time and contributed their input and best thinking to inform the development of recommendations to create a 21st century framework for student learning. In particular, we would like to thank the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce Board of Directors and the many individuals who participated in the focus groups and telephone survey as well as contributed through the array of face-to-face meetings and an online feedback form. Their contributions to this effort ensured well-rounded data collection representing various voices and locales across the state. Learning Point Associates also acknowledges the generous support from the Iowa Department of Education, including unlimited data and information sharing from Jeff Berger, Dianne Chadwick, Judy Jeffrey, Pam Pfitzenmaier, Shawn Snyder, and Lee Tack.

Finally, we would like to thank each of the Advisory Workgroup members (listed in Table 1) for their commitment to the monthly meetings, and in particular the chairs of the two groups—Bob Mundt and Mayor John Mardis—for their leadership. The Advisory Workgroup members helped inspire the draft plan and recommendations. Further, they continue to reinforce the importance of this work—that of ensuring that all Iowa students have access to a 21st century education to provide them with a solid foundation to succeed in school and in life.

**Table 1. Advisory Workgroup Members**

<b>Learner Performance and Teacher Performance Advisory Workgroup Members</b>	<b>Systems Performance Advisory Workgroup Members</b>
Chris Bern	Doug Beckman
Representative Carmine Boal (R)	Michael Beranek
Randy Braden, Ph.D.	Senator Mike Connolly (D)
Len Cockman	Bill Decker
Steve Crary	Ann Feldman
Shilpi Gupta	Sister Jude Fitzpatrick
Jim Hawkins	Dal Grooms
Laurie Kasperbauer	Mayor John Mardis
Melissa Keeney	Connie Maxson, Ph.D.
Senator Paul McKinley (R)	Mike Morrison, Ph.D.
Bob Mundt	Senator Dave Mulder (R)
Carrie Nichols	Katie Mulholland, Ed.D.
Senator Brian Schoenjahn (D)	Susie Olesen
Dan Smith, Ph.D.	Stephen Porter, Ph.D.
Jon Studer, CPA	Representative Scott Racker (R)
Roger Wilcox	Marta Sandoval
Robyn Wilkinson	Tammy Wawro
Tom Williams	Representative Roger Wendt (D)
Barry Wilson, Ph.D.	Alan Young
Representative Philip Wise (D)	
Todd Wolverton	
LaVon Worley	
Deb Wretman	

## Building a Case for Change

*“Most see the world around us has evolved in ways that are very challenging to the workforce and education. The question is what now? How do we prepare our kids for that changing world? What should be our new expectations? Are they broader than basic skills, and if so, what? And how do we know we’re accomplishing these broader expectations?”*

Advisory Workgroup Member, August 2006

Public education in Iowa has a proud past, a productive record into the present, and a crucial role to play in the state’s future. Schooling has benefited both from the state’s long-standing appreciation of individual achievement and its widespread collective commitment to good schools. For decades, Iowa’s public schools set the standard for the nation, but this long-standing edge is slowly eroding. Today, fewer of Iowa’s students are adequately prepared for college or to compete in the global marketplace. While high school graduation rates are still somewhat remarkable when compared to the nation, a high school diploma from an Iowa high school is no longer a universal signal that graduates received a 21st century education, nor does it suggest they are capable of successfully matriculating into postsecondary education. An Iowa community college leader who participated in one of the Advisory Workgroups is on record as saying there are “literally thousands of high school kids in our state who cannot read, write, or do math” and further articulated that the need for remediation among Iowa high school graduates is disconcerting.

The concern around the quality of education is further exacerbated by projections that the state will have more than 150,000 more jobs than workers to fill them by 2012—causing alarm among the state’s political leaders, the business community, and education stakeholders over how to fill these jobs with qualified individuals to ensure a vibrant future for Iowa. The Iowa Works Campaign (2006) predicts that in the next five to six years, almost half of all jobs in the state will require postsecondary education or training. In light of current predictions that suggest only 28 percent of the state’s ninth graders who enter local high schools will earn an associate’s degree within three years or a bachelor’s degree within six years of high school graduation amplifies the urgency for action (Iowa Works Campaign, 2006).

To ignite conversations about the critical need for Iowa students to be prepared for a 21st century economy, the Iowa legislature in 2005 created the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce. To address the root problem—the quality of education provided to Iowa students—this nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that by 2010 Iowa will double the number of its youth earning a postsecondary degree or certificate of employability; triple the number by 2015; and by 2020, all Iowa students will obtain a postsecondary credential. To achieve this vision, the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce has embraced one primary strategy: “education in Iowa must be performance-based” and to get there the strategy must be implemented on three intersecting fronts including learner performance, educator performance, and systems performance.

Together, these three inextricably linked priorities respect and incorporate the current education system and infrastructure in Iowa but also serve as 21st century building blocks to ensure a new and improved educational delivery system for Iowa—one that guarantees all Iowa students will have an opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the global economy.

## Introduction

In late July 2006, the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce charged Learning Point Associates, a nonprofit educational organization, with studying and developing recommendations to establish 21st century learning expectations for students, a new teacher compensation program, and a plan for an improved and efficient educational delivery system for Iowa. In response, this report and series of recommendations are a stepping stone to position the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce and the Iowa General Assembly to tackle some of the state's most fundamental educational issues and thereby ensure Iowa is positioned to provide a world-class education to all of its learners.

To guarantee thoughtful and research-based recommendations, Learning Point Associates structured data collection and analysis around the three intersecting Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce priorities shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Three Intersecting Priorities**

Learner Performance	Educator Performance	System Performance
All learners prekindergarten through postsecondary will demonstrate proficiency in 21st century skills and knowledge.	Educator excellence and compensation will be based on performance.	The state's entire education system will support learners based on 21st century measures of organizational and/or operational competency.

To understand the perspectives of those who must implement and bear the consequences of any proposed changes, Iowa education stakeholders were asked to provide input and suggestions on an ideal yet reasonable design for an integrated approach to address learner, educator, and systems performance priorities. Learning Point Associates solicited public input from the following:

- Two Advisory Workgroups comprised of Iowa stakeholders whose individual voices represent education, business, legislative, and community constituencies across Iowa.
- Seven focus groups comprised of more than 100 individuals representing the previously mentioned constituencies and rural, suburban, and urban locales across the state.
- A telephone survey conducted with 600 randomly selected registered Iowa voters.
- An online feedback form designed to collect input from all Iowans.
- The Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce Board of Directors and executive director through various face-to-face meetings.
- Various stakeholder groups who invited representatives from the Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce to present the draft recommendations at meetings.

Learning Point Associates also consulted the existing research and documented best practices to ensure this report and recommendations are grounded in what is known, what has been tested, and what has been proven to work while at the same time pushing the boundaries of the existing research to create bold and innovative recommendations.

Further, Learning Point Associates conducted a thorough review of Iowa's current approaches to learner, educator, and systems performance approaches and combined them with the various forms of public input outlined earlier. Together, this information supports the recommendations outlined in this report and specifies a defined focus on setting expectations, demanding accountability, and measuring progress to provide all learners with a world-class education and prepare them to successfully compete in the 21st century global economy.

Throughout the remainder of this report, Learning Point Associates proposes standards and assessments for teachers and students as well as improvements to the delivery system in order to improve the overall learning outcomes for Iowa students, including their access to and success in postsecondary degrees and the workforce.

## **What Did the Public Say?**

Iowans are passionate about education issues—conventional wisdom or not; Iowans hold tight to their views on what is best for their children. Rich discussions on learner, educator, and systems performance proved this time and time again, providing Learning Point Associates with significant feedback to inform the development of the recommendations. It should be noted that all facets of this work operated with the premise that Iowa must position itself to provide all learners with a superior education—regardless of some of the educational challenges present across the state, including geography, socioeconomic status, language barriers, and learning abilities.

Feedback on the topic of learner performance, the undergirding principle of this work, yielded significant support for an education system configuration that facilitates equal access to a high-quality education for all students—regardless of location. Iowans suggested they would like their students to learn communication and information technology skills to adequately prepare them for a knowledge-based economy, and they also would like teachers to adopt a more rigorous approach to teaching critical thinking, problem-solving, and other lifeline learning skills (West Wind Education Policy, 2006; Selzer and Company, 2006).

Additional discussions on this same topic suggested that the way in which learner performance is measured is of great concern to Iowans. On the surface, there appears to be a swell of dissatisfaction among Iowa residents regarding the ability of standardized tests to effectively measure student performance. According to the focus group feedback form, 65 percent of focus group participants were not confident that the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) provides a fair and accurate description of student learning in Iowa's schools (West Wind Education Policy, 2006). Participants reported a desire for the state to develop a more comprehensive assessment of learner performance, including a model that accounts for in-school and out-of-school factors. Thus, examining options that deemphasize test scores and emphasize other measures of student learning appears to be a priority.

Similar to other states that are beginning to tinker with alternative teacher compensation programs, Iowans exhibited significant passion for this topic. Linking teacher pay to student performance remains controversial in Iowa—especially if standardized test scores are the only variable in an equation that computes teacher pay based upon student performance. While there is resounding

support across the state for increasing teacher salaries, many do not support such a formulaic approach to teacher pay that fails to consider student ability factors such as learning disabilities and external student influences such as student socioeconomic status, attendance, and home life. Many would rather the state implement measures that evaluate the holistic child—including measures of curiosity, inquisitiveness, and the ability to successfully negotiate with peers.

Moreover, some Iowans suggested that if teacher pay is to be linked to performance, additional measures beyond student test scores must be considered for teachers—including peer reviews and parent and student input as well as professional development activities fulfilled to address skill gaps and enhance content expertise.

Conversations focused on efficient and effective educational delivery systems proved equally as rich as those focused on learner and educator performance. Iowans are committed to creating an educational system that supports all learners across all districts—rural, suburban, and urban—and provides students with access to a superior education to ensure success after high school. Many Iowans are even willing to provide additional money for education through a two cent sales tax increase if it means their children will have more and better opportunities than currently provided by the state (Selzer & Company, 2006). A significant number of those who provided input on equal access improvements suggested the focus on equality begin with the state’s youngest children—those who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. While the investment in early childhood education is a popular strategy in the state, much of the feedback emphasized that the state should not limit its investment to young children but also invest in all children, including high school students. Providing access to challenging and rigorous coursework—including mathematics, science, and technology courses—topped the list as a wise investment.

It also should be noted that while some Iowans are willing to provide additional dollars for education, they would like districts to implement cost-savings measures such as programs that support collective purchasing of products and services across the state as well as efficiency and accountability standards that promote good stewardship of taxpayer dollars as they relate to education spending.

## **How Did the Input Influence the Recommendations?**

The policy recommendations contained in this report are grounded not only in what is known through rigorous research conducted in other states and around the world but also by what Iowans want and know to be possible in their state. With that, the various forms of public input significantly informed the development of the recommendations and further illuminated the most salient aspects of Iowa’s education system. The invaluable ideas, comments, and opinions shared by the many Iowans engaged in this process were reviewed, analyzed, and incorporated into the recommendations with the hope that the Iowa General Assembly will recognize the voice of the various constituencies and begin to initiate innovative yet sustainable changes to what students should know and be able to do, how teachers are rewarded, and the functionality and efficiency of the system that supports education.

To drill down into the public input information, notes from Advisory Workgroup meetings and data collected from the online feedback forms and public meetings were all reviewed,

categorized, and analyzed. This information was reconciled with the information collected through the seven focus groups and the phone survey. Similarities and differences were contrasted with each form of public input to provide an overall yet balanced perspective for each method. It is important to keep in mind that policy must be crafted with a variety of considerations in mind and in this case, Learning Point Associates was most mindful of needs of current and future students in Iowa.

Learning Point Associates acknowledges that some of the recommendations do not specifically reflect the sentiments expressed through some of the public input received, yet all of the recommendations fit within a 21st century framework of a world-class educational system that supports superior student learning and rewards outstanding teacher performance. To that end, the report is organized to provide the reader a detailed description of the policy recommendations designed to create a world-class education for all of Iowa's students as they relate to learner, teacher, and systems performance as follows:

- Learner performance recommendations embrace public input by placing an emphasis on equal access to a superior education for all students and the expressed need for improved and measurable standards for student performance.
- Teacher performance recommendations incorporate public input by proposing alternative methods of measuring and raising teacher salaries across the state—including that of providing a measurable approach to linking students to teachers.
- Systems performance recommendations acknowledge public input by addressing efficiencies and improvements to the system through accountability measures for schools and districts as well as nodding to the need for increased investment in early childhood education and improved instructional offerings for high school students.



## **Integrated Design Options for Learner Performance, Teacher Performance, and Systems Performance**

Building on Iowa’s history of educational excellence and recent efforts to continue this tradition, Learning Point Associates has developed six recommendations to individually and collectively improve learner performance, teacher performance, and systems performance across the state. These include the following:

1. Set statewide 21st century learning standards and measure progress and growth toward proficiency.
2. Implement a career ladder to enhance recruitment and retention of quality teachers as a foundation for learner performance.
3. Enact and enforce operational efficiency and accountability standards and opportunity-to-learn standards; ensure alignment across districts and hold individual school districts accountable for their performance.
4. Increase access to learning opportunities available to students as well as enhance student motivation in the state from birth through postsecondary education.
5. Improve the connections between the various elements of the education delivery system in the state to support better transitions for students and system performance.
6. Expand the investment in state and local data infrastructure necessary to support teacher performance and improve student performance.

The recommendations are cross cutting yet address the priorities identified by the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce and supported by the Legislature. Recommendation 1 is intended to improve learner performance directly; Recommendation 2 is designed to improve teacher performance; Recommendations 3, 4, 5, and 6 are aimed at improving the state’s educational delivery system—including the data that will be necessary to develop, implement, and monitor Recommendations 1 and 2 (see Table 3 for an illustration). However, it is important to note that ultimately each of the six recommendations cannot be claimed a *success* just by implementation alone—they must ultimately demonstrate (individually and collectively) that all Iowa students have access to a world-class education to prepare them for life and work in the 21st century global economy.

**Table 3. Performance Ties to Recommendations**

	<b>Learner Performance</b>	<b>Teacher Performance</b>	<b>Systems Performance</b>
Recommendation 1: Set statewide 21st century learning standards and measure progress and growth toward proficiency.	X		
Recommendation 2: Implement a career ladder to enhance recruitment and retention of quality teachers as a foundation for learner performance.	X	X	
Recommendation 3: Enact and enforce operational efficiency and accountability standards and opportunity-to-learn standards; ensure alignment across districts and hold individual school districts accountable for their performance.			X
Recommendation 4: Increase access to learning opportunities available to students as well as enhance student motivation in the state from birth through postsecondary education.			X
Recommendation 5: Improve the connections between the various elements of the education delivery system in the state to support better transitions for students and system performance.			X
Recommendation 6: Expand the investment in state and local data infrastructure necessary to support teacher performance and improve student performance.	X	X	X

Each of these recommendations is presented in more detail in the following section along with action steps for implementation and estimated costs. A more comprehensive implementation plan is currently being developed to support the policy recommendations.

### **Recommendation 1: Set statewide 21st century learning standards and measure progress and growth toward proficiency.**

**Design state standards for Iowa that are (1) content specific—containing details about which aspects of specific topics should be taught, (2) comprehensive—integrating disciplinary content with critical cross disciplinary skills (e.g., communicate work clearly) throughout students’ educational careers, and (3) logically sequenced—deepening learning rather than repeating concepts year after year.**

Later we identify what the exemplary standards look like and the process used by the states to construct and implement them effectively.

Iowans agree that it is critical for their education system to prepare all learners for the 21st century. According to public input (e.g., focus groups, polling data, Advisory Workgroups, an

online feedback mechanism), schools fall short in preparing students for the highly skilled, good-paying jobs of today and those of tomorrow.

Iowa is not the only state challenged by the misalignment between what is taught in school versus what is demanded in the workplace. Across the country, states have felt the impact of an inadequately skilled workforce. To better prepare their learners, states have experimented with multiple strategies. Over time, education standards as a strategy for change have taken hold. Crafting clear statements to guide instruction and expectations for students serve as a critical first step for aligning and integrating an education system. Although standards alone will not improve student achievement, without them it is difficult for a state to significantly improve its education system.

Contrast what Iowa's student performance standards convey versus those that have received national recognition. While Iowa recently established student performance standards to ensure that Iowa's education system is designed to best serve all of its students, it is highly recommended that its student performance standards be revised to reflect the best thinking in standards construction. The state's current standards do not clearly define what students should know and be able to do at different levels. Rather than identifying specific content to be taught and skills to be developed in a logical progression, the standards are generally stated. When comparing what's expected to be taught by teachers and demonstrated by students in Grades 4 and 11, there is little substantive difference.

### ***Examples of State Standards***

Some states are crafting exemplary standards. For example, standards in Indiana, California, and Massachusetts hit the mark in their ability to guide and support student achievement. Various combinations of grade-level and content-specific standards from these three exemplar states demonstrate that embedded within and across subjects (independent of grade and content area) are opportunities to develop knowledge and critical skills for the 21st century. Other states have been applauded for their efforts to align their education system using standards as the framework from which to craft the curricula as well as their accountability systems for students and teachers. The prototypical steps carried out by North Carolina, for example, demonstrate the processes states need to undergo to align their education system. The purpose of these exemplars is to assist Iowans in their thinking about how to construct exemplary standards that may be tailored to meet the needs of every student in Iowa.

It also is important for the state to motivate students to want more and demand better from their education. The purpose of all of these recommendations is to support student learning and achievement. Therefore, it is critical to have a recommendation that speaks directly to motivating students to be successful. When designing an aligned system from standards to student outcomes, it is necessary to develop a plan for motivating students (and teachers) to succeed. It should be clear to students that the curricula based on exemplary standards will best prepare students for postsecondary success because they are linked to what the workplace and postsecondary institutions desire from their applicants.

Finally, to measure whether the education system is preparing students for life after high school, student assessments in particular need a stronger dose of realism. Word problems that fail to mimic what the problems of the real world are or how they are solved are not helpful. Students quickly realize this and lose interest in education.

### ***Immediate Next Step***

1. A nonpartisan state-level working group should be created to lead the development of standards and ensure that standards remain in tune with the needs of the state and the nation. This body's membership should include representation from K–12 educators, higher education, parents, and the business community.

Iowa's education system is well respected, both within Iowa and outside. There is will in the state to improve it, to make it a centerpiece of economic and social growth. There is strong current expert consensus about the educational outcomes that matter, about instructional practices that are truly powerful, about strong measurement of valued outcomes, and about the requirements for data and analytical systems that analyze and report results fairly and meaningfully.

### ***Estimated Costs***

Our best estimates for developing standards and training teachers are described here. We are unable to factor in assumptions for the existing level of expenditures that will be replaced in order to carry out the development and dissemination of these standards. Therefore, this is a conservative estimate at best.

**Standards Development.** The steering committee will cost approximately \$60,000 (\$20,000 for each of three years of meetings and travel). The Iowa Department of Education will need to hire one full-time employee to support this work (approximately \$125,000 per year and includes benefits, travel and administrative support costs). The stakeholder meetings (approximately 10 meetings per year for three years) plus the cost of inviting additional outside experts will cost \$90,000. Expert consultation on creating standards will cost approximately \$70,000 over three years (most of which will be spent in Year 1). Subcontracting out the actual development of standards, curricula, model lesson plans, and teaching strategies that integrate core content as well as 21st century skills will cost approximately \$1.5 million (i.e., \$500,000 per year over the course of three years).

**Training.** While Iowa currently has approximately 30,000-plus teachers, the state may choose to provide an in-depth introduction and orientation to its core-content teachers first (approximately 25,000 teachers). The training would be approximately three days and cost \$15 million (i.e., 25,000 teachers times \$200 per day times three days). As noted earlier, we are unable to provide the long-term cost estimates for training and dissemination.

**Design and adopt a student assessment system that includes (1) giving the ITBS and/or Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) in reading, mathematics, and science to all students annually and the ACT to all 11th graders; (2) applying skills assessments three**

**times during a student’s PK–12 career; and (3) giving end-of-course tests for the core high school curriculum.**

The measurement system must describe how much students know and how much they learned. This information is critical because Iowans need to know that their students know enough and that their students are growing at a pace that will assist them to meet their educational goals on time. On the other hand, Iowa must accept that a measurement system cannot gauge all that a student learns or all that a teacher and student produce together. A valid and reliable measurement system will report definitively on several core outcomes driven by test items that tap the much broader spectrum of skills and content actually taught. The National Assessment of Educational Progress should serve as a benchmark for the development of Iowa student standards and assessments to ensure that Iowa is setting its goals for 21st century learning outcomes in line with national and international goals.

### ***Immediate Next Step***

1. The proposed three-times-per-student career skills testing will require a considerable up-front test development cost, especially in that we recommend a computer-adaptive, performance-based test—not a paper-and-pencil and multiple-choice test. This increases initial cost but greatly reduces subsequent cost. Development of the assessment will take a year or two at minimum, which gives time to assure that statewide technology exists for a computer-adaptive process. This technology infrastructure appears as an additional cost. However, it can be integrated with the data system infrastructure work already begun in Iowa. Moreover, as this infrastructure for computer-adaptive testing grows in capacity, thought should be given to moving the ITBS, ITED, ACT, and even local district assessments onto the same platform for significant long-term savings. The high school end-of-course assessments, despite efforts already begun in Iowa, also should be considered new costs since they will need to align to the new content standards.
2. To support fine-grained analysis, individual student test results should be linkable to all teachers in whose classes the student participated during the school year (and preferably in prior years as well). Teacher substitutions and shared teaching loads also should be captured by the data system. Teachers for subjects other than reading, mathematics, and science also should be linked. Although subject-area teachers likely are most responsible for subject-area learning, it is also true that students learn skills related to reading, mathematics, and science in other classes. Over time, schools need to understand how each teacher and each subject contributes to student learning.

### ***Estimated Costs***

Table 4 provides a preliminary and subjective estimate of development and annual implementation costs.<sup>1</sup> Iowa’s education general fund for school year 2004–05 totaled \$3,731,569,754. The estimated \$9 million in new assessment development dollars represent less

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<sup>1</sup> We use data described by Caroline Hoxby (2003) plus information from our own experience with testing and analysis. Other sources may provide different numbers. Nevertheless, we believe these numbers to be indicative of sound basic implementations.

than 0.2 percent of that fund; annual administration and maintenance expenditures would represent an almost insignificant 0.09 percent. Of course, general fund monies are always fully accounted for, so adding these new expenditures requires political will.

**Table 4. Testing Estimated Costs**

	<b>Per Pupil Cost</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Multiplier</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Startup costs</b>				
Skills test development				\$1,500,000
End-of-course development			10 courses	\$7,500,000
<b>Startup total</b>				<b>\$9,000,000</b>
<b>Annual administration</b>				
ACT	\$29.00	38,500	1	\$1,116,500
Skills test	\$0.85	35,000	3	\$89,250
End-of-course tests	\$1.50	150,000	5 courses per student; 2 semesters	\$2,250,000
<b>Annual total</b>				<b>\$3,455,750</b>

## **Recommendation 2: Implement a career ladder to enhance recruitment and retention of quality teachers as a foundation for learner performance.**

**The Iowa legislature should share the cost of initial implementation and provide technical assistance to local school districts making a transition from existing single-salary schedule arrangements to a career ladder plan. (Further information about necessary steps to fully implement a career ladder can be found in the Implementation Guide)**

### ***Iowa’s Prior Experience with Teacher Performance and Pay-for-Performance***

Iowa does not enter into a discussion of pay-for-performance and alternative teacher compensation plans without experience. To move on this topic, Iowa—like most other states in the nation—faces two sizeable challenges, each lying beyond the basic challenges of recruitment and retention. One is how to continue to elevate student performance. The other is to engage professional educators more fully in this quest and reward them fairly for their added efforts.

**Educational Excellence Program.** In 1987, the Iowa Legislature approved the Educational Excellence Program, which became effective July 1, 1987 (fiscal year [FY] 1988). The program was geared toward increasing teacher pay in the state. The Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau (1997) announced, “A standing appropriation of \$92.0 million was provided to fund the program, however, actual expenditures for FY 1988 were \$86.1 million” (p. 1).

At the outset, the Educational Excellence Program consisted of three phases:

- Phase I: Increase minimum teacher salaries for recruitment of quality teachers.

- Phase II: Supplement teacher salaries for retention of quality teachers.
- Phase III: Utilization of performance pay to enhance quality and effectiveness of teachers.

As a result of the initiative, 477 Iowa school districts submitted plans for teacher pay increases—tapping funding for Phases I and II of the program. “To qualify for a share of the additional \$42 million [Phase III], districts had to develop plans that based the raises on performance, additional work loads, or additional academic coursework” (Flax, 1988). Most of the approved plans that had Phase III components called for higher pay for additional work or advanced training *only*. Phase III was discontinued during the 2003 legislative session amid decreasing funding and legislative discomfort with the direction of the program and the lack of linkage to student performance.

**Student Achievement and Teacher Quality (SATQ) Program.** During the 2001 Iowa legislative session, the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality (SATQ) program was established through Senate File 476 (2001). SATQ created several components, including the following:

- Mentoring and induction programs to provide support for beginning teachers.
- Career paths with compensation levels to strengthen Iowa’s ability to recruit and retain teachers.
- Professional development designed to support best teaching practices.
- Team-based variable pay providing additional compensation when student performance improves.
- Evaluation of teachers against the Iowa teaching standards.

In both the 1987 and the 2001 programs, districts submitted plans that addressed broad state criteria. The 1987 Phase III program paid teachers for their behavior (as opposed to their performance per se), and most district plans reflected this emphasis. While the 2001 SATQ legislation was a bold move to tie pay to performance, it lacked an “individual” pay-for-performance dimension. A team-based provision provided rewards in addition to teachers’ normal salary. Furthermore, both efforts fell short primarily because of a lack of state funding. Only the first two steps of the “Career Path” were actually implemented.

In its first Annual Report the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce recommended that Iowa fund the 2001 Student Achievement/Teacher Quality Program to complete the state’s commitment to the bold professional teacher performance and compensation model. Salaries for college and university faculty should be examined for competitiveness. To embark on the primary goal of improving teaching and learning and become more competitive in recruiting talented professionals who might otherwise leave the state or pursue another profession, immediately raise the minimum teaching salaries to a range of \$32,000 to \$40,000, with a goal of moving from 41st nationally to 25th in average teachers’ salaries.

In 2006, the Iowa Legislature created the Teacher Pay-for-Performance (PFP) Commission to “design and implement a pay-for-performance program and provide a study relating to teacher and staff compensation structures containing pay-for-performance components” (Iowa Department of Management, n.d.). Beginning July 1, the PFP Commission anticipates a teacher pay-for-performance pilot program with 10 school districts participating (H.F. 2792, 2006).

The recommendations from Learning Point Associates attempt to reflect a design that ties teacher performance in a more solid, fair way with learner performance. We also suggest a mixed-model approach so that student performance is not the exclusive indicator.

Presently, local school districts in Iowa and elsewhere typically employ a two-dimensional salary system. On one hand, promotion to higher rank and status almost inevitably removes one from the classroom to become an administrator. On the other hand, activities for which present-day pay practices compensate teachers—years of experience, state certification, and added college courses beyond a bachelor’s degree—have little or no empirically supported relationship to gains in student achievement.

No longer should an Iowa teacher have to choose between the rewarding activity of elevating students’ understanding and skill in a classroom and, alternatively, either leaving teaching altogether or having to become an administrator to earn the standard of living and quality of life to which many reasonably aspire.

The purpose of a career ladder is multifold. First, it aims to recruit larger numbers of able individuals into teaching by offering a higher entry-level salary. To aid retention, a teacher has the option of an annualized salary that compresses the time needed to advance to higher salary levels and (when combined with a pay-for-performance plan) offers an opportunity to earn even more through individual and collective effort. Second, the career ladder aims to justify teacher pay on a more rationally defensible basis than the current single-salary schedule system, which overrewards experience, advanced college credits, and certificates.

Efforts to achieve these twin objectives, a career ladder and an instructional performance reward structure, should take advantage of the substantial prior progress that Iowa made toward development of a career ladder for teachers. This progress includes having already designed a spectrum of conditions and processes by which an Iowa teacher could progress through a multistage career ladder. The previously developed career advancement criteria contained an appropriate mix of professional judgment and student performance criteria.

In situations where teachers are a part of a teachers association or union, there can and should be a role in the development of pay for performance plans and the goals of those plans (Odden, Kelley, Heneman, & Milanowski, 2001; Milanowski, 2002). This collaboration may take place under the normal auspices of the collective bargaining process (which can sometimes be adversarial) or outside the boundaries of the negotiation procedure. In places where details for a pay for performance program were negotiated during the collective bargaining process (Denver, Minneapolis, Nashville), relationships between teachers and administrators were based on a great deal of trust and shared vision before and during the planning process (Milanowski, 2002).



### ***Immediate Next Steps***

1. Enact and implement a statewide performance-based career ladder over the next three years building on the elements of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Act of 2001. This strategy should combine measures of professional growth with student progress to result in a teacher compensation plan that links teacher pay with student progress (pay for progress).
2. Local school districts would have an option of elevating teacher pay higher than the state proscribed minimums, but would not be able to offer a lower amount at any particular rung on the career ladder. State school finance subventions would provide each local district or administrative area with an equalized financial wherewithal to ensure fiscal ability to meet minimal salary schedule levels.
3. With the approval of the local bargaining representative, if any, school districts may opt into the career ladder program in the first year (FY2008), but participation should become mandatory in the third year.
4. Assuming approval and sufficient funding for statewide implementation of the career ladder, then a three-year trial period could be devoted to the development of detailed performance measures beginning with the operation of pilot projects beginning in summer of 2007.

### ***Career Ladder Proposal***

- **Apprentice.** The SATQ Act (2001) provisions for a “Beginning Teacher” shall apply except that the minimum salary shall be \$35,000 for teachers in hard-to-staff schools and in subject areas where there is a shortage. The minimum salary for all other teachers will be \$32,000. For each succeeding year, the minimum salary shall be at least the 40th percentile of teachers nationally in their second year of teaching.
- In addition to mentoring as otherwise provided in SATQ, each beginning teacher (Apprentice) shall receive direct support with classroom management and for understanding the academic standards and for using student assessment data and other diagnostic tools available in the school and district. An Apprentice Teacher who is not promoted after three years shall be terminated.
- **Assistant/Career I.** The SATQ provisions for a “Career Teacher” shall apply except that the minimum shall be \$10,000 above beginning minimums. Upon entering into a “career development program,” the teacher shall demonstrate that he/she understands the standards and benchmarks for his/her subject or grade level and, with support of his/her immediate supervisor, shall commit to student achievement goals, which demonstrate normal year-end academic growth for the majority of students receiving instruction.
- **Associate/Career II.** Teachers will enter the “Career II” level after at least four years of successful teaching and the minimum salary shall be \$20,000 above beginning minimums.

- The SATQ provisions for a “Career II Teacher” shall apply. Career II teachers must implement a unique program of teaching and learning that is peculiar to the needs of students receiving instruction, and which incorporates 21st century skills, academic standards, student leadership development, and applied learning. The teacher(s) shall demonstrate that he/she (they) understands the standards and benchmarks and, with the support of his/her immediate supervisor, shall commit to student achievement goals, which demonstrate normal year-end academic growth for the majority students receiving instruction.
- **Master/Advanced.** A teacher may become an “Advanced Teacher,” as described in SATQ, and the minimum salary shall be \$30,000 above the beginning minimum. An Advanced Teacher will meet the instructional provisions of a Career II teacher but may be asked to provide leadership among colleagues in his/her school, or across the district or region. The review panel will confirm that the teacher’s professional practice demonstrates superior year-end academic growth for a majority of students receiving instruction.

### ***Pay-for-Performance Pilot Demonstration Sites***

Teacher pay for performance is not new in the nation, nor in Iowa. Historically, there have been initiatives put forward by which teacher pay would be linked to measures of teacher proficiency or measures of student performance. The last major round of activity in this sphere was in the 1970s and ’80s. At the time, the idea paraded under the label “merit pay.” That movement spread dramatically across the nation’s policy landscape and then rapidly faded into operational oblivion. In addition to resistance by professional educators, the movement failed because it paid little attention to matters of accurate and fair measurement of teacher performance or student achievement, was insufficiently linked to analytic efforts to appraise its strengths and weaknesses and make midcourse corrections, and offered financial incentives of a magnitude insufficient to motivate added teacher enthusiasm or performance change. For these reasons, developing valid and reliable measures for assessing teacher performance is key to successful long-term implementation. The pilot projects authorized in June 2006 provide Iowa the opportunity to test a variety of approaches to rewarding teachers for improved student performance, and their operation might be based on the following draft plan.

**Table 5. Proposed Pay-for-Performance Plan for Iowa**

<b>Award Strategy</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Additional Pay Range</b>	<b>Means for Determining Eligibility</b>	<b>Form of Pay</b>
I. Student value-added reward	Individual	3% to 5 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student test scores</li> </ul>	Annual bonus Base salary addition or acceleration
II. Teacher appraisal-based reward	Individual	3% to 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer or peer and supervisor appraisals of teacher performance and (possibly) knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Acquisition of attributes specified as abetting district or school pursuit of higher student achievement</li> </ul>	Bonus Base salary addition or acceleration
III. Whole-school reward (Inclusion of classified employees optional)	Group	3% to 5 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student test scores</li> <li>• Teacher attendance</li> <li>• Other?</li> </ul>	Annual bonus
IV. Hard-to-staff rural schools and subject area shortages	Individual	5% to 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market factors applied to specified shortage definitions</li> </ul>	Annual Bonus

***Evaluating the Effects of Career Ladder and Pay-for-Performance Initiatives***

Arrangements will be needed continually and systematically to appraise the operational consequences and strengths and weaknesses of both the proposed career ladder system and the pay-for-performance system. This appraisal can be undertaken by a state agency. However, it also can be undertaken through a contract to a reputable program evaluation firm or agency. Regardless of the specific pay-for-performance system that is piloted, each should be carefully followed with good data systems to ensure that midcourse corrections are possible.

**Table 6. Proposed Implementation Timeline**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Detailed Pay Plan Design (Including linking career ladder rungs and performance bonuses to Iowa economic conditions).	Iowa Department of Education	January–2007
Design RFP to enlist 10 districts to develop and pilot pay for performance measures.	Pay for Performance Commission	January–April 2007
Legislative consideration of career ladder plan.	Iowa General Assembly	February–March 2007
Communication to Iowa School Districts	Iowa Department of Education	April–August 2007
Local district implementation and sustained appraisal of career ladder implementation and pilot project operation	Iowa Department of Education (Opting in school districts if it is Track Two)	September 2007–

### ***Estimated Costs***

Costs will depend upon where competitive salary ranges are established for each career ladder rung and the magnitude the proposed performance bonuses. However, the state can control costs by specifying the speed at which the plan is implemented. A statewide full transition to both a career ladder and a set of performance reward components can be undertaken for approximately \$200 million in excess of what is presently expended. This cost can be spread over state appropriations and local district revenue contributions.

**Recommendation 3: Enact and enforce operational efficiency and accountability standards and opportunity-to-learn standards; ensure alignment across districts and hold individual school districts accountable for their performance.**

**Enact legislation to support the development of operational efficiency and accountability standards and opportunity-to-learn standards to ensure all students have access to a world-class education. School districts would be responsible for implementation of these standards and the state would enforce them.**

Iowans consulted for this project have expressed a sincere commitment to their local schools as a central focus of communities. However, available data show that all students in the state do not have equal access to learning opportunities. Where a student lives in large part determines the availability and quality of learning opportunities—exacerbating the achievement gaps among students from high- and low-poverty families as well as among students of color and English language learners. Rather than mandating minimum or maximum school size as a way to address

this inequality, we propose a performance-based system centered on the availability and quality of learning opportunities for students.

### ***Immediate Next Steps***

1. A performance-based system in Iowa requires clearly defined and articulated operational efficiency and accountability standards and opportunity-to-learn standards. These standards should be developed by qualified individuals with stakeholder input and assisted by appropriate state agencies.
2. The Legislature should enact these standards and work with the Iowa Department of Education to implement them in each and every school district across the state.
3. The Iowa Department of Education and the area education agencies (AEAs) will play a vital role in supporting districts as they implement operational efficiency and accountability standards and opportunity-to-learn standards.
4. After three years, school districts that fail to meet targeted goals would be dissolved as an independent body and required to restructure under state guidance.

(Additional details regarding this process may be found in an Implementation Guide currently being developed.)

Developing an educational delivery system that maintains local control, while honoring a new performance-based approach to operational efficiencies and opportunities to learn, requires a more robust, extensive, and varied role for the Iowa Department of Education and AEAs. It requires the state to articulate both operational standards and opportunity-to-learn standards that challenge districts to reach high levels of performance. This is a challenging undertaking and as a result, implementing a performance-based system with accountability and incentives for performance should happen thoughtfully, allowing enough time to strong performance-based standards, for districts to implement the standards, and for the state and AEAs to support districts in this implementation process.

### ***Estimated Costs***

This section provides rough cost estimates of the recommendations discussed above. These estimates are intended to give the reader a relative sense of how much these proposal might cost. It is likely that these estimates will not precisely be reflected if the state implements these proposals. The Iowa Department of Education did not have the personnel to fully cost out the recommendations at this time. Additionally, how much the program will actually cost depends on some key decisions the state of Iowa makes in moving to implement them.

Meeting and demonstrating fulfillment of the state standards will require a substantial investment at the state and district levels. Modeling from the private sector, we estimate that about 10 percent of a districts spending should be dedicated to continuous improvement. As a part of the continuous improvement process, about 1 percent of this spending should be committed to the

instructional and business standards auditing process. In Iowa, this would suggest that statewide, about \$30 million should be spent on the instructional auditing process and \$10 million should be spent on auditing business services. The state needs to decide what portion of this funding should come out of current budgets and how much should be allocated to the districts on a per pupil basis.

### **Recommendation 4: Increase access to learning opportunities available to students as well as enhance student motivation in the state from birth through postsecondary education.**

#### **Commit to providing high-quality preschool programming to all Iowa 3- and 4-year-olds.**

The research strongly demonstrates the importance of high-quality early education programs. By the time students begin kindergarten, differences in students' access to stimulating learning experiences begin to produce significant and lasting differences in cognitive and noncognitive skills. Because education is a cumulative process with each year's instruction building on what was learned the previous year, these gaps are magnified as students move through the system (Heckman, 2006). Randomized controlled trials, in which groups of eligible low-income students were either assigned to receive high-quality preschool programming or to a control group, show that students who were enrolled in a high-quality preschool program reap long-term positive benefits (i.e., Masse and Barnett, 2002; Schweinhart, Montie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield, & Nores, 2005). Nobel-prize winning economist James Heckman calculates that one preschool program achieves rates of return between 15 percent and 17 percent. While estimates range depending on the intensity, quality, and length of early education services, this investment has a cost-benefit ratio (the ratio of aggregate program benefits over the life of the child to the input costs) of 8 to 1 (Heckman, 2006).

#### ***Immediate Next Steps***

1. Iowa should develop state program standards based on national standards developed by organizations such as the National Institute for Early Education Research or the American Pediatric Association. The Iowa Department of Education would play a more central role in ensuring that state-funded preschools are offering high-quality programming
2. Funding would be allocated by the Iowa Department of Education to school districts based on enrollment to provide preschool to all 3- and 4-year-olds in their attendance area. Districts could either provide these services in house or contract with outside organizations to provide preschool services.

#### ***Potential Challenges***

The greatest challenge to expand access to early education is maintaining quality as access increases. In a rush to provide all students access to early education services, the state could outpace its capacity and quality could suffer. For this reason, an incremental approach to implementation of universal preschool is necessary.

## ***Estimated Costs***

This section provides rough cost estimates of the recommendations discussed. These estimates are intended to give the reader a relative sense of how much these proposals might cost, but actual costs will depend on some key decisions the state of Iowa makes in moving to implement them.

Expanding the state's preschool program to provide access to all 3 and 4-year-olds requires a substantial investment of state funds. Assuming the 87 percent of the state's 4-year-olds would ultimately be covered under a universal preschool program, the Iowa Department of Education estimates that at full implementation, a universal preschool program for just 4-year-olds would cost the state \$75.6 million annually at full implementation. This estimate takes into account the fact that approximately 27 percent of 4-year-olds are currently covered by state or federally funded preschool programs. According to this estimate, it costs \$3,200 annually to provide preschool services to each 4-year-old (J. Berger, personal communication, Iowa Department of Education, 2006). This estimate is consistent with state spending on preschool services by Iowa in the past. The actual cost could vary based on the quality and extensiveness of the services offered.

A much smaller proportion of 3-year-olds are currently covered in the state, meaning that expanding universal preschool to this group would be even more expensive. Currently, the National Institute for Early Education Research estimates that 1 percent of the state's roughly 39,192 3-year-olds are enrolled in a state or federal preschool program. If 3-year-old enrollment in a universal preschool program were to reach 87 percent of all eligible 3-year-old preschoolers, the annual cost of the state would be roughly \$107 million, making the combined cost of providing preschool services to all 3- and 4-year-olds in the state \$182.6 million annually.

## **Work to make higher education more affordable for all Iowa students through greater state investment and increased efficiency.**

By 2012, 45 percent of all occupations nationwide will require some postsecondary training. In fact, 40 of the top 50 fastest growing occupations nationally now require postsecondary training. Yet for every 100 Iowa students who enter the ninth grade, 83 graduate from high school in four years, 54 go right to college after high school, 37 return to college for a second year, and only 28 earn an associate's degree in three years or a bachelor's in six years (Ewell, Jones, & Kelly, n.d.).

In addition to mastery of fundamental skills such as the ability to read, write, and perform basic calculations, employers are increasingly demanding that employees come to work with applied skills such as a strong work ethic, the ability to think critically and solve problems, and the ability to communicate and work effectively on a team. This skills gap impacts Iowa's ability to attract employers to the state. In Iowa, a 2003 survey of more than 600 businesses identified lack of available skills labor as the top workforce factor influencing their ability to grow in the region. Fifty-six percent of businesses surveyed in the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids corridor reported that their employees were missing skills that they desired.

Unfortunately, students face financial barriers to higher education attainment. In 2006, the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education gave Iowa the grade of F on affordability. Tuition at Iowa's public postsecondary institutions has risen dramatically in recent years. Between the 2005–06 and 2006–07 school years, for example, tuition was up by 4.5 percent at the University of Iowa, 4 percent at Iowa State University, and 5.5 percent at the University of Northern Iowa. In Iowa in 2006, tuition at a two-year community college after financial aid was equivalent to 26 percent of the average Iowa family's annual income. Tuition at a four-year public university was equivalent to 30 percent of the average Iowa family's annual income. Tuition at a four-year private institution in Iowa amounted to 59 percent of the average Iowa family's annual income (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2006). Low- and moderate-income families are especially hard hit by the increase in tuition. The cost of higher education may deter some students from attending while saddling others with a significant amount of debt.

### ***Immediate Next Steps***

1. The state should commit to higher levels of funding for higher education to keep tuition at the Regents Universities and the state's community colleges a realistic option for all Iowa students. The state should commit to keeping tuition at public institutions manageable for students and providing assistance to those who need it.
2. The Regents Universities and community colleges should look across campus boundaries to develop enterprise wide opportunities for improved productivity in business processes. Savings generated should be reinvested in maintaining or improving academic services while diminishing the growth rate of tuition.
3. Productivity targets should be set cooperatively by a representative team of knowledgeable stakeholders in Iowa higher education. The Iowa Student Aid Commission should be enlisted to explore whether similar actions can be taken in private colleges and universities enrolling students receiving student aid paid for by Iowa tax dollars.

### ***Potential Challenges***

The greatest challenge to expand access to postsecondary education is maintaining quality as access increases. Keeping costs down to increase access to higher education should not come at the expense of quality. Iowa has a history of supporting strong public postsecondary institutions, both at the community college and at the university level. It would be a disservice to Iowa students to sacrifice this commitment to quality for increased access.

### ***Estimated Costs***

Increased efficiency will help increase the cost of a community college and university education in the state below the state's cost-of-living adjustment. The state also will have to maintain the current level of funding for higher education, taking inflation into account. A market analysis will be done annually to determine how much funding the state must provide in



order to assure that faculty salaries remain competitive and tuition does not increase above the cost-of-living adjustment. If the cost of higher education outpaces the cost-of-living adjustment, the state will be responsible for infusing the necessary funding in the system to maintain current tuition levels. It is not possible to estimate how much this will cost annually with the data that are currently available.

### **Recommendation 5: Improve the connections between the various elements of the education delivery system in the state to support better transitions for students and system performance.**

**The legislature, the Iowa Department of Education, the Governor’s Office, and the Iowa Board of Regents should work together to identify barriers to better align Iowa’s system of PK–16 education and work collaboratively to improve transitions for students from one point in the system to another.**

Iowa’s current education delivery system is fragmented. The Iowa Department of Education, AEAs, local school districts, community colleges, and the Board of Regents all independently make decisions that impact students. In some ways, this fragmentation is a result of Iowa’s long tradition of local control. Local communities have different needs and have identified differing approaches to meeting these needs.

However, this approach can create challenges for students as they move from one institution to another. These barriers make it difficult to ensure that one level of the system is providing students with the skills they need to succeed at the next level. Rather than bring stakeholders together to identify ways to meet students’ needs, fragmentation tends to lead to finger pointing and other unproductive activities. This has been particularly challenging when students move from early education services to the K–12 system and when students move from the K–12 system to postsecondary institutions and the workforce.

#### ***Immediate Next Steps***

1. Create an Education Steering Commission charged with overseeing and guiding the state’s various education agencies to improve alignment, articulation, and performance. The Education Steering Commission would be composed of the director of the Iowa Department of Education, the director of the Department of Management, the chairman of the Board of Regents, a representative from the community colleges, a representative from the Iowa Business Council, the governor’s chief education advisor, and the chair and ranking members of the Iowa House and Senate Education Committees. In addition to alignment, the commission will be responsible for holding the state’s education agencies responsible for the articulation and sequencing of learning opportunities and supports across the various education levels in the system, with a specific focus on increasing postsecondary attendance and graduation or attainment of vocational training and certification.
2. Institute a regional approach to connecting education and economic development that brings together K–12 educators, the business community, and higher education to ensure

a smooth transition from high school to the workforce, further training, and postsecondary education for all students. As a part of this system, each school district should create a career cluster system that provides students with both strong academic and real-world, problem-solving skills—including access to strong mathematics and science courses, rigorous communication courses (written and verbal), and realistic and collaborative opportunities. The state’s 15 community colleges have long played a coordinating role in connecting education and economic development and should be given additional financial support to play a bigger leadership role in the development of a career cluster system in districts and communities that fall within the 15 regions they serve.

3. Give the Iowa Department of Education an increased leadership role in coordinating the services offered throughout the state to students ages birth to 3. Currently, the Iowa Department of Education works with AEAs to provide services with student with disabilities. These efforts should be expanded to reach a larger groups of students and to ensure that this programming aligns with the state-funded preschool programs these children will attend. The Iowa Department of Education would play an important role in ensuring a smooth transition from services offered to very young children (ages birth to 3), to the state preschool program (targeting 3- and 4-year-olds), and eventually to kindergarten (age 5).

### ***Estimated Costs***

This section provides rough cost estimates of the recommendations discussed above. These estimates are intended to give the reader a relative sense of how much these proposal might cost. It is likely that these estimates will not precisely be reflected if the state implements these proposals. The Iowa Department of Education did not have the personnel to fully cost out the recommendations at this time. Additionally, how much the program will actually cost depends on some key decisions the state of Iowa makes in moving to implement them.

**Education Steering Commission.** Rather than identifying a new set of stakeholders to serve on the Education Steering Commission, the Commission would draw on leaders who are already in leadership positions throughout the state. Commission members’ salaries are not a new expenditure. The Commission will be staffed by the one full-time staff person at the Iowa Department of Education. It is estimated that this person’s salary, plus benefits and supplies, will cost \$125,000. Additionally, the Commission will meet quarterly with each meeting costing approximately \$3,000. An additional \$10,000 will be set aside for bringing outside consultants and publications to be used as the Commission sees fit. Thus, the annual cost of the Commission meetings will be approximately \$147,000.

Every 10 years, the Commission will perform a more comprehensive review of the state’s education delivery system. A good estimate for the cost of this review is the annual allocation received by the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce as the charge of this Commission every 10 years closely mirrors that of the Institute. For this reason, we estimate that every 10 years, the work of the Commission will cost approximately \$800,000.

**Education and Economic Development System.** The Iowa Department of Education will hire one full-time employee at \$100,000 (salary and benefits) to oversee the Education and Economic Development System. The 11 AEAs will hire Regional Education and Economic Development Coordinators, costing \$880,000 annually. About \$33,000 should be allocated to support meetings of the 11 regional Education and Economic Development Coordinating Councils. Additionally, \$12 million should be allocated to districts throughout the state on a per-pupil basis to provide support for professional development, materials, and staff time to implement the comprehensive Education and Economic Development System. (This amount is roughly .05 percent of current spending on instruction and instruction related services in the state.). This brings the total cost of the Education and Economic Development System to \$13,013,000.

**Greater Coordinator of Early Education Services.** To better coordinate Early Education Services, individuals from various agencies in the state need to be brought to the table as discussed above. To do this well, funding must be provided for two full-time employees at the Iowa Department of Education, a half-time employee at the Department of Health and a part-time employee at the Department of Human Services, costing the state roughly \$300,000 (including salaries, benefits, and supplies). An additional \$12,000 should be allocated to bringing together stakeholders to examine system alignment and performance, and \$30,000 should be set aside for consulting services and publication. This brings the total annual cost of the greater coordination to \$342,000.

## **Recommendation 6: Expand the investment in state and local data infrastructure necessary to support teacher performance and improve student performance.**

**Iowa should centrally implement a system that tracks students uniquely and identifiably from preschool through college and that would be linked to a system to track educator performance.**

The system could be modeled after the current system for tracking students with disabilities. In order to enhance efficient reporting, the system also should contain copies of select information about each student, including annual state assessment results, school attendance, school grade point, and transcripts as well as basic demographics. These records will follow students during their school years wherever they are while appropriate permission systems will assure the data remain confidential.

A similar central system to track educators should be constructed. The two systems would readily connect student, teacher, course, and school information. It is immaterial whether the data exist in one or several physical systems as long as functionality is present.

### ***Immediate Next Steps***

1. Ensure that districts, schools, school leaders, and teachers have appropriate, supported, facile access to current and historical data from both state assessments and each school's or district's own assessment and reporting processes.

2. The Iowa Department of Education should propose and implement a standard set of principles for local data analysis and construct supports for such analyses. These principles should at minimum include support for the application of statistically sound growth models, for interactive and visual approaches to analysis of assessment and performance data, for rapid and flexible data aggregation and disaggregation, and for ad hoc queries to follow urgent local interest.

# **The Challenge and the Opportunity: Assuring Value for Iowa's Future Education System**

## **The Challenge**

The nation is at a critical juncture with respect to the forces that push and pull the education and labor connection—both sides must commit to the necessary changes to ensure all students are adequately prepared for workforce. A recent study by The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006) focused on the readiness of the latest participants to the labor force, and it claims that this workforce is “woefully ill-prepared” for today’s demands (p. 1). Gunderson, Jones, and Scanland (2005) report that between 2000 and 2015, approximately 85 percent of new U.S. jobs will require some form of education beyond a high school diploma. Additionally, almost 60 percent of employer respondents project that their companies will increase hiring of four-year college graduates and about half project increased hiring of two-year college graduates (Gunderson et al., 2005).

Iowa is not exempt from these circumstances; it is easy to predict that at least half of all occupations in Iowa will soon require postsecondary education or training. It would seem that as much as Iowa may be in competition with China or India as many suggest, it is equally in competition with itself to better educate youth while it works to attract more people to the state. By 2012, Iowa will have more than 150,000—some project 200,000—more jobs than it has workers to fill them. This is a predictable result of Baby Boom retirements converging with the state’s stagnant population growth. (In the last five years, Iowa saw 1.4 percent growth versus 5.3 percent nationally.)

The portion of Iowans 25 years and older who hold a bachelor’s degree is disproportionately low, well below the national average, ranking only 36th nationally (Iowa Department of Education, 2006). Further, the report shows that for every 100 students starting ninth grade in Iowa, only 83 graduate from high school within four years. Only a portion of those 83 graduates will obtain either an associate’s degree within three years or a bachelor’s degree within six years. Attaining a postsecondary degree is especially difficult for students who are poor, and gaining access to and paying for the cost of a college education is increasingly complicated. Chances for students who are poor to attain a college degree are staggeringly low compared to their nonpoor counterparts in the state.

In the final section of this report, we provide a current context and overview of the opportunities and challenges specific to Iowa for the three areas of focus: *teacher performance and pay-for-performance* as well as *systems performance*, all to support the *performance of learners*.

## **Learner Performance**

Iowa’s public schools have served the state well for decades and continue to do so (Battelle’s Technology Partnership Practice, 2006). As technologies improve, Iowa refines its ability to measure the performance of its students. Iowa benefits from long-term collaboration with two

premier assessment developers, the Iowa Testing Program at the University of Iowa and ACT Inc. The state's current student performance measures include the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, the Iowa Tests of English Language Learning, and the ACT.

Some recent flattening of trends in student performance on these measures suggests now is an opportune time to reconsider what is taught in Iowa's schools and how it is taught. Making Iowa's students successful in the future will require new and innovative teaching methods. "Proficiency" in basic skills will not suffice for Iowa teachers. To significantly impact student preparedness so that students are equipped for success after high school, seven of 10 Iowa voters say teachers must teach critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and eight of 10 say students need to learn communication and information technology skills (Selzer & Company, 2006). Iowans are ready to demand higher expectations for their students, and standards that define those expectations have the potential to dramatically improve teaching and learning. If the goal is to create an educational system that provides a superior education for all learners, the state must continue to focus on teaching but teaching must be different, deeper, more effective, and more productive.

Iowa's current performance measurement system focuses primarily on student outcomes, although it should be noted that there are teacher performance standards currently in place and teachers are assessed against those standards. Iowa students' and educators' understanding of the processes that support learning over time are still somewhat limited. To monitor and enhance student growth as well as teacher instruction, a major recommendation contained in this report is for Iowa to measure teacher instructional processes in addition to student outcomes. By capturing both student and teacher performance information, Iowa's education system will be better equipped to support and serve its students.

The learner performance recommendations put forth by Learning Point Associates are designed to inform Iowa's thinking about how to fairly and reliably measure student and teacher performance over time so that the Iowa educational system may better serve all learners.

## **Teacher Performance and Pay-for-Performance**

One necessity to providing a foundation for learner performance and driving toward standards for students is to draw on teacher capital by developing and supporting a career ladder as well as enhancing motivation. To that end, Iowa has embraced two major efforts in the past to do just that—one that began in 1987 and one in 2001.

### **1987: The Educational Excellence Program**

In 1987, the Iowa Legislature approved the Educational Excellence Program, which became effective July 1, 1987 (fiscal year [FY] 1988). The program was geared toward increasing teacher pay in the state. The Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau (1997) announced, "A standing appropriation of \$92.0 million was provided to fund the program, however, actual expenditures for FY 1988 were \$86.1 million" (p. 1).

At the outset, the Educational Excellence Program consisted of the following three phases:

- Phase I: Increase minimum teacher salaries for recruitment of quality teachers.
- Phase II: Supplement teacher salaries for retention of quality teachers.
- Phase III: Utilize performance pay to enhance quality and effectiveness of teachers.

As a result of the Phase III component of the initiative, 477 Iowa school districts submitted plans for hikes in teacher pay—tapping funding for Phases I and II of the program. “To qualify for a share of the additional \$42 million [Phase III], districts had to develop plans that based the raises on performance, additional work loads, or additional academic coursework” (Flax, 1988). Most of the approved plans that had Phase III components called for higher pay for additional work or advanced training *only*. Phase III was discontinued during the 2003 legislative session amid decreasing funding and legislative discomfort with the direction of the program and the lack of linkage to student performance.

### **2001: Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program**

During the 2001 Iowa legislative session, the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program was established through Senate File 476 (2001). SATQ created several components, including the following:

- The first part of a new four-level career ladder based on skills and knowledge—not experience and degrees. The four levels of the career ladder were Beginning, Career I, Career II, and Advanced.
- Team-based variable pay pilots—three different groups of pilots completed in three different years.

For both the 1987 and the 2001 attempts at paying teachers for their performance, districts were to submit plans that addressed broad state criteria. The 1987 Phase III effort allowed for teachers to be paid for their behavior (as opposed to their performance, *per se*), and most district plans reflected this emphasis. While the 2001 SATQ effort was a bold move to tie pay to performance, it was solely a team-based effort and rewards were in addition to teachers’ normal salary. Furthermore, both efforts fell short primarily because of a lack of state funding.

Since these attempts, the Teacher Pay-for-Performance Commission was created by the Iowa Legislature to “design and implement a pay-for-performance program and provide a study relating to teacher and staff compensation structures containing pay-for-performance components” (Iowa Department of Management, n.d.). Beginning July 1, the Pay-for-Performance Commission will commence its teacher pay-for-performance pilot program with 10 participating school districts (House File 2792, 2006).

The recommendations from Learning Point Associates attempt to reflect a design that ties teacher performance in a more solid, fair way with learner performance. We also suggest a mixed-model approach so that student performance is not the exclusive indicator.

## Systems Performance

Iowa's education system has a long and distinct history that evolved in accordance with the developing education needs of Iowans and the economic needs of the state. The state's five main bodies that support the public education system include: the Iowa Department of Education, local school districts, AEAs, community colleges, and the Board of Regents—all of which have significantly shaped the education system that exists today. To that end, it is important to understand how each of the following five entities works and connects to the other:

- The Iowa Department of Education—in collaboration with the State Board of Education—provides oversight, supervision, and support for the state education system, including the state's public elementary and secondary schools, the nonpublic schools that receive accreditation, AEAs, community colleges, and teacher preparation programs.
- Local school districts are responsible for PK–12 education in Iowa. There are 365 school districts in Iowa serving 483,105 students and employing 34,175 full-time teachers. In school year 2005–06, 44 percent of the state general fund or \$2.2 billion dollars was appropriated to PK–12 education (Iowa Department of Education, 2005b).
- AEAs provide educational services to districts throughout the state. These services aim to improve student learning either directly through programs and services or indirectly through sustained professional development programs designed to improve instruction. Of the 15 original AEAs, 11 remain today as a result of reorganization. Media and educational services provided by AEAs are funded by property taxes, but special education services are funded through a combination of state aid and local property taxes similar to school districts.
- Community colleges are a significant part of the educational landscape in Iowa and are designed to provide educational and community services to meet the needs of Iowans. One of the greatest challenges currently facing Iowa's 15 community colleges is their costs. The average annual full-time Iowa community college tuition for academic year 2005–06 increased \$162 (5.89 percent) to \$2,916 from the previous year. Even more startling is that average tuition for Iowa's community colleges is 60.84 percent above the national average (Iowa Department of Education, 2005a).
- The Iowa Board of Regents holds the responsibility of overseeing the state's three public universities—Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. In the 21st century, the Regents Universities face the challenge of increasing affordability and retention as well as ensuring their graduates remain in the state after graduation (Board of Regents, State of Iowa, 2006).

To meet the needs of Iowa students in the 21st century, the five institutions that make up the educational delivery system in the state must commit to continuous improvement in order to improve system access, alignment, and accountability. Iowa has a strong history of local control of schools, yet Iowans remain concerned that students throughout the state do not have equal access to high-quality learning opportunities. As what students need to know and be able to do to succeed in the 21st century becomes increasingly rigorous, the state must commit to supporting and providing incentives for school districts throughout the state to provide access to high-quality learning opportunities for their students. Further, the system needs to expand to ensure



that students come to school ready to learn and leave high school ready and able to pursue additional education opportunities. Finally, the fragmented organizations that make up Iowa's education delivery system must improve alignment to ensure that students experience a smooth transition from one level of the education system to the next and to improve overall system performance.

The information regarding learner performance, teacher performance, and systems performance provides a short overview and context to the opportunities and challenges Iowa faces as the state takes the next steps to capitalize on quality efforts of the past and present.

## **Conclusion**

This report attempts to provide research-based evidence and important historical context about Iowa's past and present as the baseline for thinking about the future of education and adopting a course for change. The authors hope this report provides a conceptual place to begin the rich conversations necessary to move toward creating a 21st century policy framework for student learning.

Creating a 21st century policy framework for student learning is a complex undertaking and necessitates simultaneous conversations about how to best improve and align the many parts of the education system at one time—including learner, educator, and systems performance.

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Supports and Barriers in the Transfer of Community College Courses to  
Teacher Education Programs in Iowa

# **Supports and Barriers in the Transfer of Community College Courses to Teacher Education Programs in Iowa**

**A Report to the Iowa Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant's  
Cross-Articulation Team**

**August 2008**

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## Introduction

As states and districts struggle to meet the demand for high quality teachers, there are growing calls to expand the role of community colleges in preparing new teachers (Schuhmann, 2002; Lee-Bayha and Villegas, 2003; Parsons, 2003). Policymakers have suggested that community colleges are well suited to address teacher shortages and contribute to a more diverse teacher workforce (Coulter & Vandal, 2007). As a result, community colleges have assumed a more active role in teacher education through partnerships with four-year institutions and the creation of an Associate of Arts in Teaching degree that transfers to a teacher education program (Shkodriani, 2004).

Iowa is uniquely situated to engage community colleges in teacher preparation because of its existing efforts to improve the transfer of courses between two- and four-year institutions. The state developed articulation agreements<sup>2</sup> that allow community college students to transfer an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree to meet general education requirements at the three Regent universities. Community colleges in Iowa developed a common course-numbering system to further support the transfer of courses. In addition, the Regent universities have developed online tools that allow community college students to plan out which courses will transfer.

The state is addressing the role of community colleges in teacher education as part of its Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) grant. The TQE grant is designed to strengthen teacher education through reforms that hold teacher preparation programs accountable, improve the knowledge of prospective teachers, and ensure that teachers are well prepared for teaching. Within the TQE grant, the Cross-Articulation Team is focused on a variety of goals related to course transfer, including the possible creation of a statewide articulation agreement for community colleges and teacher education programs at four-year institutions.

In January 2008, the Cross-Articulation Team commissioned Learning Point Associates to conduct a study to identify the barriers students face in the process of transferring from a community college to a teacher education program and the resources used by students in the transfer process. Learning Point Associates gathered information on these two aspects of the transfer process by conducting a survey of teacher education transfer students and interviewing community college advisors. The goal of this work is to provide universities and community colleges a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the transfer process.

This report includes four main sections, as follows: (1) a description of the methodology used to survey transfer students and interview community college advisors, (2) an analysis of the results of the student survey, (3) a discussion of the findings from the interviews with community college advisors, and (4) a summary of the findings.

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<sup>2</sup> There are different types of articulation agreements in Iowa. A statewide articulation agreement allows for the transfer of an Associates of Arts (A.A.) degree between community colleges and the four-year Regent institutions. Some private four-year institutions have developed general articulation agreements that define the transfer of community college associate's degrees.



## Methodology

The Cross-Articulation Team requested that Learning Point Associates examine the supports and barriers in the process of transferring community college courses to teacher education programs. To gather information on the transfer process, we conducted two data-collection activities: an online survey of teacher education students who transferred community college courses and telephone interviews with community college advisors who work with students interested in pursuing a teaching degree.

### Online Survey

The online survey included teacher education students at six four-year institutions in Iowa. We selected a purposive sample of four-year institutions in the state that offer a teacher education degree. The Cross-Articulation Team expressed an interest in having a mix of public and private institutions; so, we included all three Regent universities and three private institutions. We selected private institutions based on the size of their transfer population. We ranked private institutions based on a recent study that examined the number of community college students that transferred to four-year institutions across the state (Laanan et al., 2007). The three private institutions that received the largest number of transfer students were selected to participate in the study. This approach increased the likelihood that the selected institutions would have an adequate number of transfer students for the survey.

The resulting sample is not representative of all of teacher education programs in the state of Iowa. Rather, the survey findings are specific to the Regent universities and the three private institutions with the largest number of community college transfer students. The three Regent universities in the sample range in size from 12,000 to 30,000 students, and the three private institutions range in size from 2,000 to more than 5,000 students. In terms of geographic distribution, the four-year institutions are located in five different community college districts across the state. The private institutions included in the study are based in the western, central, and northeastern regions of the state.

The survey included students who had *any* community college credit prior to enrolling in a teacher education program. Rather than selecting a random sample of students, we surveyed the full population that met the eligibility criterion. Each teacher education program identified eligible students based on current enrollment data. The number of students identified by each institution ranged from 60 to more than 1,400, for a total of about 2,600 students. In addition, the survey confirmed students' eligibility by asking whether they had any community college credits prior to enrolling in a current teacher education program. This question identified 69 students as ineligible for the survey, resulting in a total of 2,543 students who qualified for the survey, which included 2,060 public students and 483 private students.

The survey methodology has a key shortcoming—it excludes students who did not to attend a teacher education program because of issues related to the transfer of community college courses. The survey includes only those students who successfully made the transition to a four-year institution. Ideally, the survey would have included all students who planned to transfer community college courses to a teacher education program, regardless of whether they

eventually completed the transfer process. The exclusion of these students potentially omits additional students who faced challenges and failed to complete the transfer process.

Students received information about the survey through an initial email that requested their participation. We sent emails to students one week after the end of their institution's spring break, and provided students three weeks to complete the survey. Several emails were sent to remind students about the survey, and we offered an incentive of a \$100 gift card to two randomly selected respondents to encourage participation.

We received a total of 358 completed responses from eligible students, for a 14 percent response rate. The response rate was the same for public and private institutions. A low response rate may introduce bias into the results if nonresponders are different from responders in ways that are related to the outcome measures. Because of study limitations, we were unable to follow up with nonresponders to determine how they differed from students who responded.

Our analysis excludes 13 students who transferred credits from community colleges located in other states. Because the purpose of the Cross-Articulation Team is to address issues related to the transfer of coursework from Iowa's community colleges to its four-year institutions, we excluded out-of-state transfer students. The remaining sample of 345 students provides the basis for our analysis.

The online survey (see Appendix A) included questions about the transfer of general education and teacher education coursework from a community college to a teacher education program. To assess how students viewed the course transfer process, the survey asked students to rate the ease of the process. A series of close-ended questions was used to identify which challenges students had experienced in the process and the resources they had used to support the process. A literature review of the common challenges and resources in the transfer process provided the basis for these questions. Several background questions provided context for interpreting the results, such as the number of community college credits, degrees completed, status at transfer, and demographic information.

## **Telephone Interviews**

Because the online survey did not include students who attempted to transfer to a teacher education program but did not complete the process, we conducted telephone interviews with six community college advisors. We selected the community colleges that sent the largest number of transfer students to the teacher education programs included in our sample. The dean of each teacher education program provided an estimate of which community colleges sent the most transfer students to the program. This approach ensured a sample of community colleges that had experience working with students who transferred to a teacher education program. However, a limitation of this approach is that community colleges sending a large number of students to teacher education programs may have the fewest challenges in the transfer process.

Within each community college, we tried to identify an advisor who worked with students interested in pursuing a community college degree. Community colleges identified an advisor as well as a program director or instructor who had a secondary role as an advisor to students. As a

result, for each community college, we conducted two interviews, usually one with an advisor and one with another staff person involved in advising.

We conducted all of the interviews by phone using a structured protocol (see Appendix B for interview questions). The questions focused on the supports and barriers in the transfer process. We asked advisors how students identified courses that would transfer and how students transferred these courses to a four-year institution. Challenges in the transfer process may occur at either of these points. The protocol also distinguished between the transfer of general education and teacher education coursework because the challenges and barriers for each type are likely to be different.

## Student Perspectives on Course Transfer

The online survey captured the perspective of students who transferred community college courses to a teacher education program. The survey gathered information on when students began planning their transfer, the types of courses students transferred, the challenges students faced in the transfer process, and the resources and tools students used to support the transfer process.

Throughout the survey analysis, a distinction is made between the transfer of general education courses and teacher education courses. This distinction is important because general education and teacher education courses transfer differently from a community college to a four-year institution. The transfer of general education courses is guided by articulation agreements that allow students to transfer their A.A. degree to meet general education requirements at a four-year institution. For example, a statewide articulation agreement defines the transfer of an A.A. degree from an Iowa community college to the three Regent universities, while general articulation agreements provide the basis of transferring an A.A. degree between community colleges and private four-year institutions. There are no formal articulation agreements that define the transfer of teacher education courses to meet requirements for a teacher education program. These courses are transferred on a course-by-course basis unless the community college has worked out an informal arrangement for the transfer of teacher education courses.

Since transfer students differ in the amount of community college credits they have completed, the following section describes three types of transfer students. The next section examines the timing of when students sought information on transferring and the type of courses transferred by survey respondents. The subsequent sections analyze student opinions of the transfer process, challenges in the transfer process, and resources used for the transfer process.

### Types of Transfer Students

To capture the full range of transfer experiences, the survey included students who had *any* community college credits before enrolling in their teacher education program. As a result, teacher education students who responded to the survey had a variety of community college backgrounds. About one third of respondents completed fewer than 15 community college credits, one third completed 16–60 credits, and another third completed more than 60 credits. Just under half of the respondents (45 percent) earned an associate's degree before enrolling in a teacher education program. Based on their community college experience before enrolling in a teacher education program, we organized survey respondents into the following categories:

- **Minimal coursework, no associate's degree.** Thirty percent of respondents took fewer than 15 hours of community college courses and did not earn an associate's degree. These respondents most likely transferred a small number of community college courses to fulfill a specific requirement at their four-year institutions. These respondents are referred to throughout the report as *respondents with minimal coursework*.
- **Some coursework, no associate's degree.** Twenty-four percent of respondents completed more than 15 hours of community college credits but did not earn an associate's degree. These respondents may have taken community college courses with

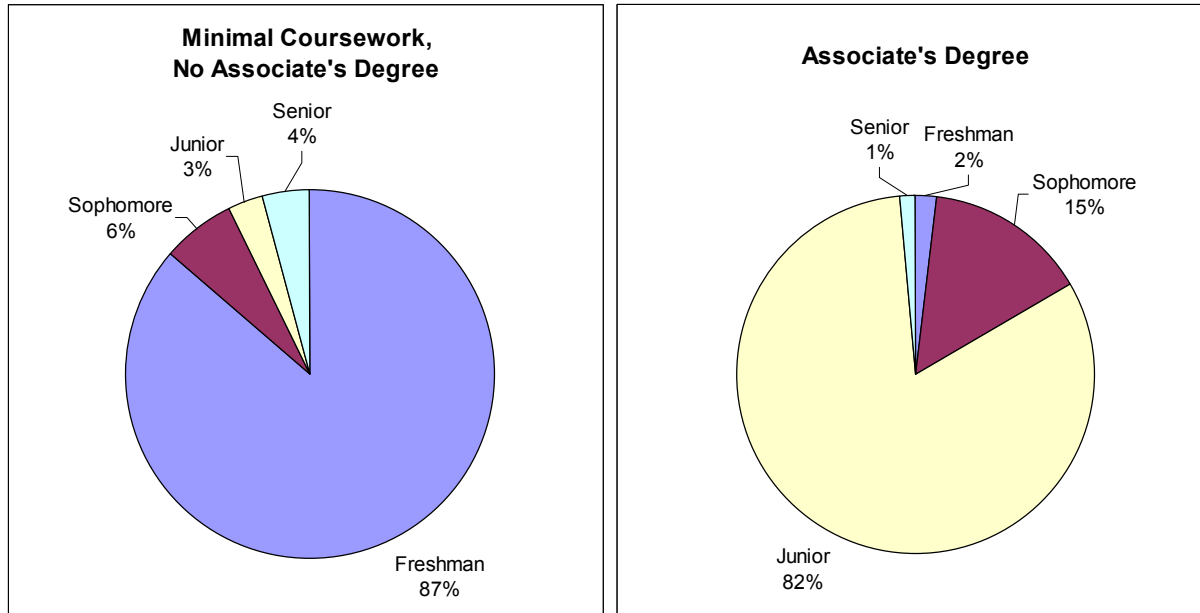
the intention of transferring individual courses or a block of courses to complete requirements at their four-year institutions. The report refers to this category as *respondents with some coursework*.

- **Associate's degree.** Forty-six percent of survey respondents completed an associate's degree, with most earning an A.A. Most of these respondents (about 90 percent) transferred their A.A. to meet general education requirements at their four-year institutions. In this report, these respondents are referred to as *respondents with an associate's degree*.

The experience of transferring courses is likely to vary across these groups of respondents because of statewide and general articulation agreements that allow students to transfer an associate's degree to meet general education requirements at many four-year institutions in Iowa. Instead of having to transfer each course individually, these students complete an associate's degree and can transfer it to their four-year institution to fulfill general education requirements. Students who complete community college coursework without obtaining a degree typically transfer credits on a course-by-course basis. This can lead to additional challenges because four-year institutions may accept some general education courses as part of the associate's degree but not as an individual course transfer.

Distinct differences emerge in the education path of these three types of transfer students (see Figure 1). Most respondents with minimal coursework initially transferred as freshmen to four-year institutions. They may have transferred community college courses to reduce their course load as freshmen or to reduce the amount of time required to complete their degree at a four-year institution. As expected, more than 80 percent of respondents with an associate's degree transferred to their four-year institutions as juniors. Statewide articulation agreements specify that students with an associate's degree transfer into four-year institutions as juniors. About 15 percent of respondents with an associate's degree transferred to a four-year institution as sophomores. Respondents with some coursework transferred to their four-year institutions as a mix of freshmen (37 percent), sophomores (35 percent), juniors (26 percent), and seniors (2 percent).

### **Figure 1. Status When Respondents First Transfer to a Four-Year Institution**

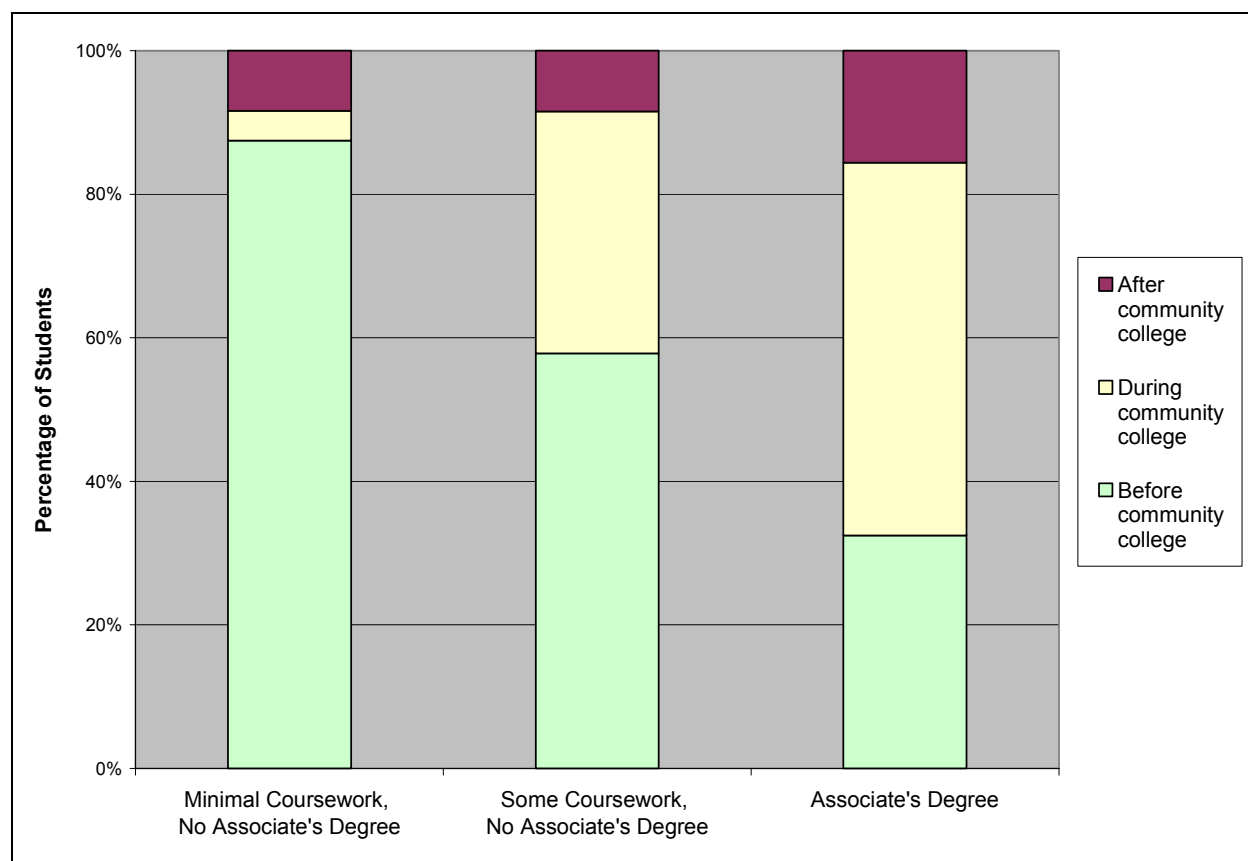


## Transfer Planning

The earlier that students seek information on transferring, the more time they potentially have to identify courses that will transfer, learn about the transfer process, and prepare for their eventual transfer. The survey asked students when they initially sought information about transferring from a community college to a four-year institution. Just over half of survey respondents first sought information on transferring to their four-year institution *before* they enrolled in a community college. A third of respondents began planning their transfer *during* community college, and the remaining 10 percent did not seek information on transferring to a four-year institution until *after* they left a community college, with or without a degree.

The three types of transfer students sought information on transferring to a four-year institution at different times (see Figure 2). Most respondents with minimal coursework began planning their transfer before enrolling in community college. This finding suggests that students who plan to transfer minimal amounts of coursework may have specific requirements from their four-year institutions that they fulfill with community college credits. These students may be more likely to plan their transfer before community college to ensure these individual courses transfer. This contrasts sharply with respondents who obtained associate's degrees and were more likely to begin planning their transfer during community college. About half of respondents with an associate's degree first sought information on transferring during community college. These students may delay their initial planning because they know they can transfer as a junior. Among respondents with some community college coursework, more than half initiated their planning before community college and one third began during community college.

**Figure 2. Timing of When Respondents First Sought Information on Transferring to their Four-Year Institution**



## Type of Course Transfer

The survey provides insight into whether teacher education students transfer general education courses, teacher education courses, or both types of courses. In addition, the survey distinguishes whether respondents *attempted* to transfer each type of course and whether the four-year institution *accepted* any of the courses.

Almost all respondents who had community college credits prior to enrolling in a teacher education program transferred these credits to meet general education requirements at a four-year institution. Table 1 shows that 97 percent of survey respondents attempted to transfer community college courses for general education requirements. All but two of the respondents reported that their four-year institution accepted at least one community college course to meet these requirements.

The transfer of community college courses to meet teacher education requirements is less common than the transfer of courses to meet general education requirements. Sixty percent of respondents with community college credits attempted to transfer courses for teacher education requirements. The transfer of teacher education coursework may be less common because some community colleges do not offer teacher education courses, or because students delay their decision to pursue an education degree. Similar to the transfer of general education courses, the

vast majority of respondents who attempted to transfer courses had at least some courses accepted for teacher education requirements. Overall, 57 percent of respondents reported that their current four-year institution accepted at least one community college course to meet teacher education requirements.

**Table 1. Number and Percentage of Respondents Transferring General Education and Teacher Education Courses**

	Number of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents
<b>General Education Course Requirements</b>		
Attempted to transfer courses	334	97%
Institution accepted at least one course	332	96%
<b>Teacher Education Course Requirements</b>		
Attempted to transfer courses	205	60%
Institution accepted at least one course	191	57%

Among the different types of transfer students, those with an associate’s degree were most likely to transfer teacher education courses. More than 75 percent of respondents with an associate’s degree attempted to transfer teacher education courses, compared to only 36 percent of respondents with minimal community college coursework. This finding is expected because most of the respondents with minimal community college coursework transfer to a four-year institution as freshmen and may not have enrolled in teacher education courses at their community college.

About half of respondents with some community college coursework tried to transfer teacher education courses. The more community college credits these respondents had, the more likely they were to transfer courses to meet teacher education requirements. For example, respondents who took more than 30 community college credits without earning a degree transferred teacher education courses at rates similar to respondents who had associate’s degrees.

## Student Opinions of Course Transfer

Throughout the following analysis of course transfer, we focus on students who *attempted* to transfer either general education or teacher education courses. We included only students who attempted to transfer courses because they have experience with the transfer process. For example, students who did not attempt to transfer teacher education courses may not have taken teacher education coursework and may not have a basis for commenting on the transfer process.

Most respondents who attempted to transfer general education or teacher education courses from a community college to a four-year institution described the process as “easy” or “somewhat easy.” Among the 334 survey respondents who tried to transfer general education courses, 86 percent described the process this way. Similarly, 80 percent of respondents who tried to transfer teacher education courses described the process as easy or somewhat easy. The proportion of



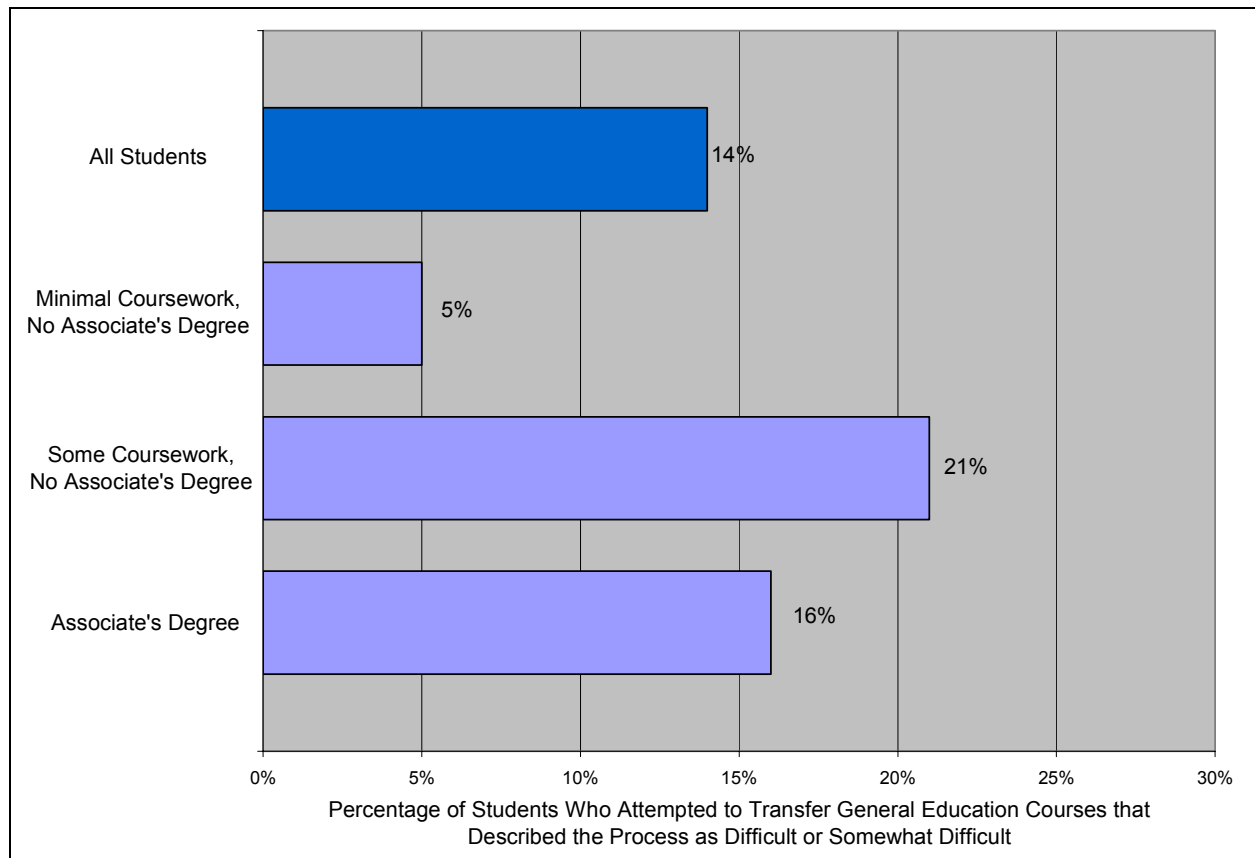
respondents who tried to transfer courses and found the process “difficult” or “somewhat difficult” was 14 percent for general education courses and 20 percent for teacher education courses.

A closer examination of the data shows that certain types of students were more likely to have difficulty in the process of transferring general education courses (see Figure 3). Among students who attempted to transfer general education courses, 21 percent described the transfer of general education courses this way, compared to 16 percent of respondents with an associate’s degree and 5 percent for respondents with minimal coursework.

The proportion of respondents who found the transfer of general education courses difficult increases with the number of community college credits completed for respondents without an associate’s degree. Although 36 percent of respondents with more than 60 credits found the process difficult, 14 percent of respondents with 16 to 30 credits described it as difficult. As mentioned above, students without an associate’s degree typically transfer credits on a course-by-course basis. Transferring courses in this way may lead to more challenges for a couple of reasons. First, four-year institutions may accept certain courses as part of an associate’s degree but not accept these courses if transferred individually. Second, there are more opportunities for students without an A.A. degree to make a mistake in selecting courses when they take a large number of credits.

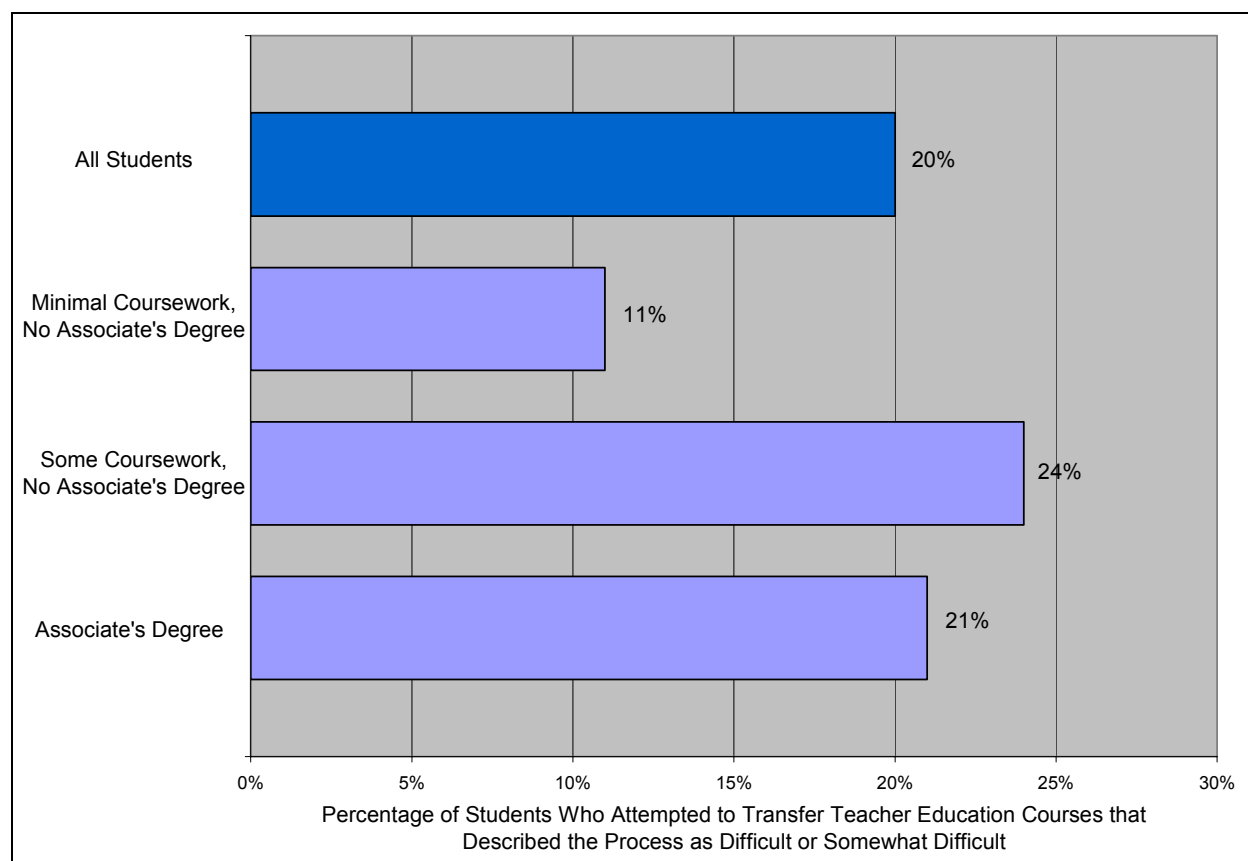
It is possible that these distinctions reflect differences across the three types of students. For example, respondents with minimal coursework may report the least difficulty because they have more resources or because they have more time to plan and identify courses that transfer. Without additional information about the different types of respondents, it is not possible to distinguish which factors—whether personal characteristics, the transfer process, or any other factors—led to differences in whether respondents found the process difficult.

**Figure 3. Percentage of Respondents Who Attempted to Transfer General Education Courses and Described the Process as Difficult or Somewhat Difficult**



Across all types of students, a higher proportion of those who tried to transfer teacher education courses found the process difficult compared to the transfer of general education courses (see Figure 4). Among respondents with some coursework and respondents with an associate's degree, more than 20 percent described the process as difficult. While respondents with an associate's degree can transfer their degree to meet general education requirements, articulation agreements do not cover the transfer of teacher education requirements. This may explain why the proportion of these respondents who found the transfer of teacher education courses difficult was higher than the proportion who described the transfer of general education courses as difficult.

**Figure 4. Percentage of Respondents Who Attempted to Transfer Teacher Education Courses and Described the Process as Difficult or Somewhat Difficult**



## Challenges in the Transfer Process

The survey investigated the prevalence of three challenges often associated with the process of transferring community college courses: (1) a four-year institution accepts fewer courses than a student expected; (2) a student retakes a community college class to meet a general education or teacher education requirement; and (3) a student takes more community college courses than he or she originally expected, in order to meet a general education or teacher education requirement. We explore these challenges separately for the transfer of general education and teacher education courses.

### Transfer of General Education Coursework

Overall, 17 percent of respondents who attempted to transfer general education coursework had fewer courses accepted than they expected. This challenge was more common among those with some coursework and those with an associate's degree than among those with minimal coursework (see Table 2). For a variety of reasons, students may have fewer general education courses accepted than they expected. For instance, a student may have a misperception about which or how many courses transfer or may have failed one or more community college courses. In addition, students may take lower level remediation courses that do not transfer to four-year

institutions; or take general education courses that are only accepted by an institution as part of an associate's degree.

About one in four respondents who attempted to transfer general education courses repeated a community college course to meet general education requirements. The same proportion took more community college courses than expected to meet general education requirements. Respondents with an associate's degree were more likely to repeat a community college course, and respondents with some coursework were more likely to take more community college courses than expected. Just over 30 percent of those with an associate's degree who attempted to transfer general education courses took more community college courses than expected to meet a general education requirement. This finding could reflect several factors, such as students with misguided expectations of course requirements, students who change majors just before transferring, or students who took developmental courses at a community college. This finding is surprising, given that articulation agreements allow students to transfer the associate's degree to fulfill general education requirements.

**Table 2. The Prevalence of Challenges in Transferring General Education Courses**

	Respondents Who Attempted to Transfer General Education Coursework							
	All Respondents		Respondents with Minimal Coursework		Respondents With Some Coursework		Respondents With an Associate's Degree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Institution Accepted Fewer General Education Courses than Expected	57	17%	13	13%	21	21%	27	18%
Repeated a Community College Course to Meet General Education Requirements	88	26%	21	22%	18	22%	49	32%
Took More Community College Courses than Expected to Meet General Education Requirements	86	26%	22	23%	25	30%	39	25%

### Transfer of Teacher Education Coursework

Among respondents who attempted to transfer teacher education courses, about one in four had fewer teacher education courses accepted than expected (see Table 3). A higher proportion of respondents faced this challenge in the transfer of teacher education coursework than in the transfer of general education coursework. Two types of respondents—those with some coursework and those with an associate's degree—experienced this challenge at a higher rate.

Twenty-six percent of respondents who attempted to transfer teacher education courses repeated a community college course to meet teacher education requirements. A slightly lower proportion, 22 percent, took more community college courses than expected to meet teacher education requirements. Respondents with some coursework were more likely to experience both of these challenges. One third of respondents with some coursework (who attempted to

transfer teacher education coursework) repeated a course or took more courses than expected. Among those with an associate's degrees who attempted to transfer teacher education courses, 27 percent repeated a community college course in order to meet a teacher education requirement.

The survey asked about an additional challenge related to the transfer of teacher education coursework. Respondents were asked if they completed a field experience at the community college that was not accepted by their four-year institution. A lower proportion of respondents experienced this challenge compared to the other challenges. Just over 15 percent of respondents with an associate's degree who tried to transfer teacher education courses experienced this challenge, the highest proportion among the different types of students.

**Table 3. The Prevalence of Challenges in Transferring Teacher Education Courses**

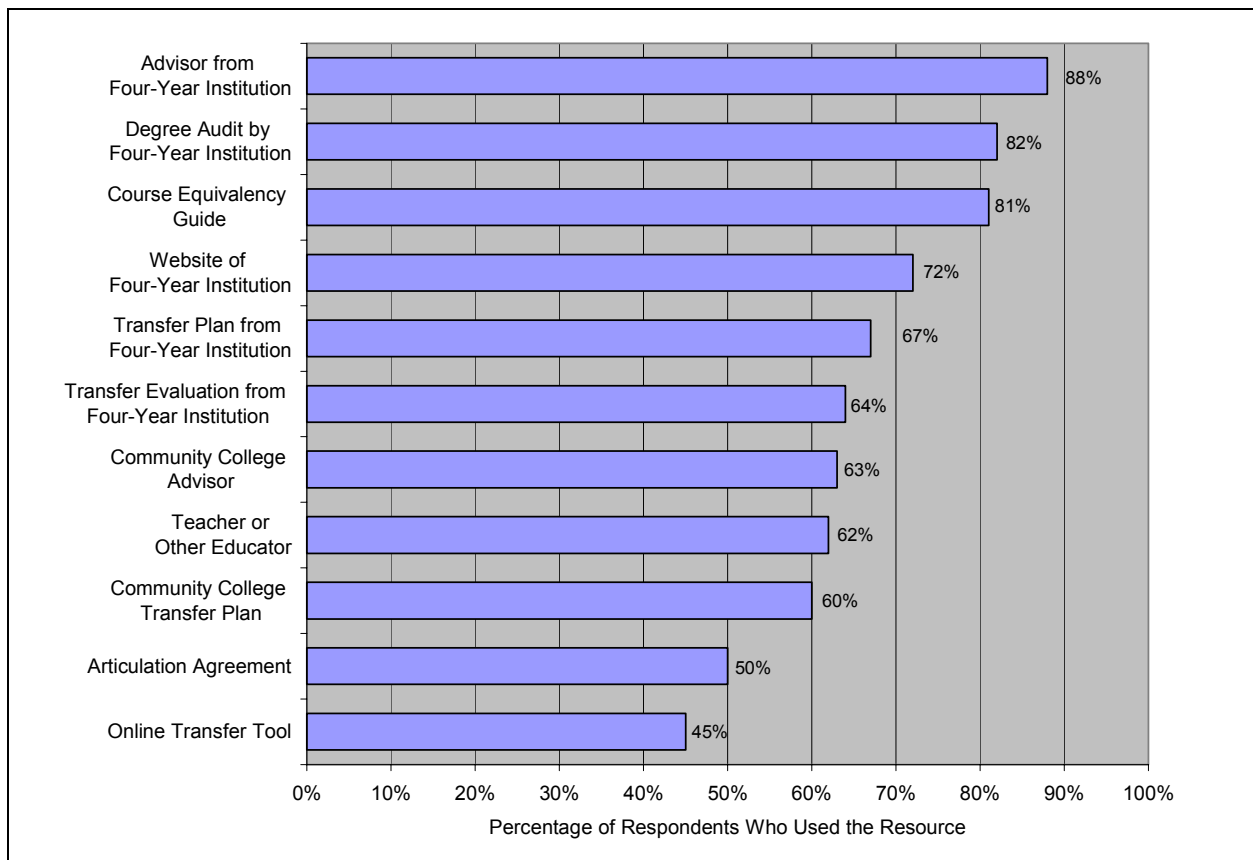
	Respondents Who Attempted to Transfer Teacher Education Coursework							
	All Respondents		Respondents with Minimal Coursework		Respondents With Some Coursework		Respondents With an Associate's Degree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Institution Accepted Fewer Teacher Education Courses than Expected	53	26%	5	14%	12	26%	36	30%
Repeated a Community College Course to Meet Teacher Education Requirements	54	26%	6	16%	15	33%	33	27%
Took More Community College Courses than Expected to Meet Teacher Education Requirements	46	22%	7	19%	15	33%	24	20%
Field Experience Not Accepted	24	12%	1	3%	4	9%	19	16%

## Supports for the Transfer Process

Community college students potentially rely on a variety of supports in the process of transferring courses to a four-year institution. The survey asked respondents which resources they used in the transfer process and whether they found them useful. To compile a list of potential resources, we relied on a report by Iowa's Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (2003) that outlined the resources available for transfer students.

Figure 5 shows how many respondents used each resource, and Figure 6 shows the proportion of those respondents who found the resources "useful" or "very useful." Advisors at four-year institutions are at the top of the list, with 88 percent of respondents reporting that they relied on an advisor. Several other resources provided by four-year institutions are commonly used by respondents, including a degree audit (82 percent), the website for the four-year institution (72 percent), a transfer plan (67 percent), and transfer evaluations from the four-year institution (62 percent). Among the respondents who used each resource, more than two thirds described each resource as useful or very useful. The high rate of respondents using resources from a four-year institution is expected because four-year institutions have the ultimate authority to decide whether a course transfers.

**Figure 5. Percentage of Respondents Who Used Each Resource**

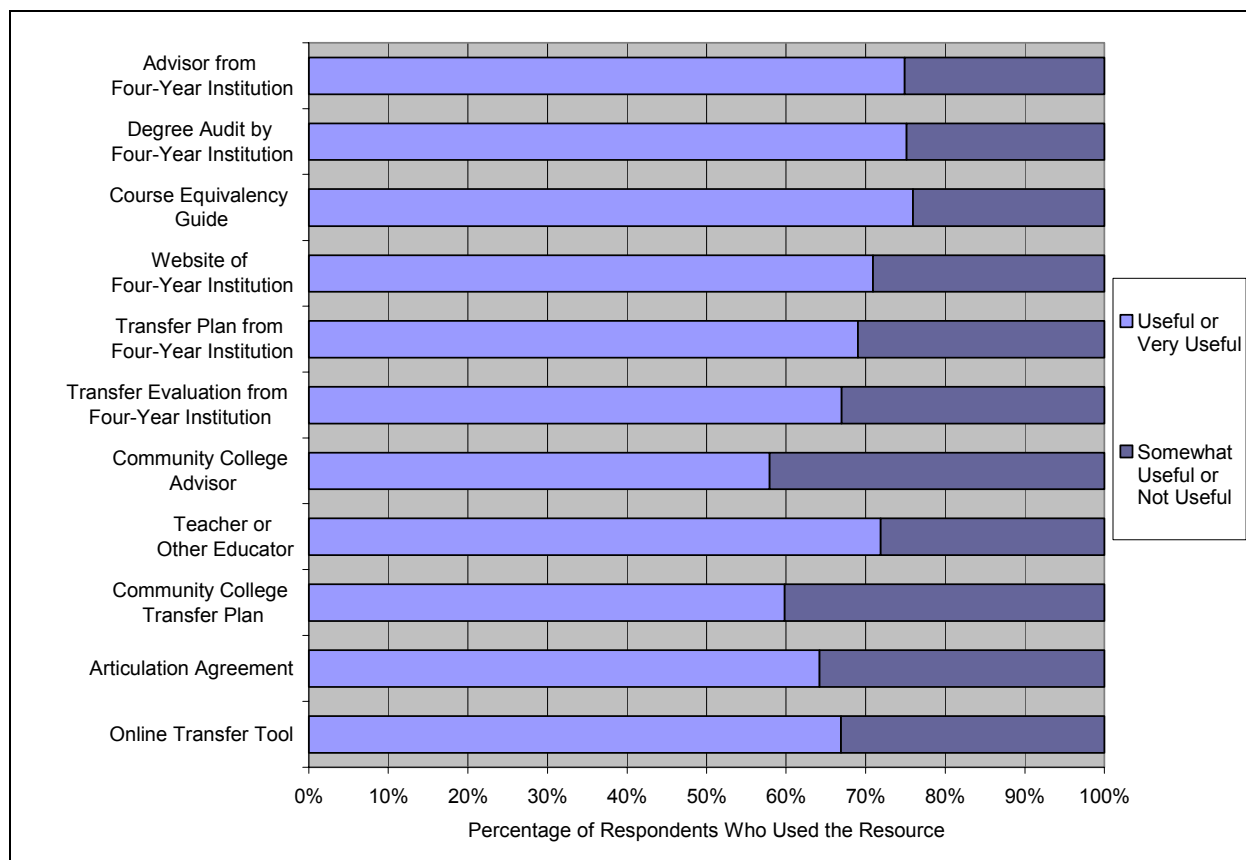


Fewer respondents relied on resources from a community college for the transfer process: 63 percent of respondents used a community college advisor, and 60 percent relied on a transfer plan from the community college. In addition, a lower percentage of respondents using these resources found them useful compared to other resources: 58 percent of those using a community college advisor and 60 percent of those using a community college transfer plan described them as useful or very useful.

A relatively high proportion of respondents used course equivalency guides and found them useful: More than 80 percent of respondents used a course equivalency guide, and three fourths of those found it useful. Course equivalency guides describe how individual courses transfer from a community college to a four-year institution. Although a smaller number of respondents used articulation agreements, two thirds of those who used an agreement found it useful. As mentioned, statewide and general articulation agreements define how an associate's degree transfers to meet general education requirements at a four-year institution.



**Figure 6. Percentage of Respondents Who Found Each Resource Useful or Very Useful**



Two resources had fewer users but received strong ratings for usefulness among those who relied on them. Fewer than half of all respondents used an online transfer tool, but 67 percent of those who used one found it useful. An example of an online transfer tool is the University of Northern Iowa’s Transfer Plan-It that allows students to enter their courses and determine how they transfer. Similarly, a relatively high proportion of respondents who relied on a teacher or educator as a resource found them to be useful (72 percent).

Most respondents relied on multiple resources in the process of transferring community college courses. Sixty percent of respondents used more than four resources. The patterns of use differed across the different types of students. Half of respondents with an associate’s degree used more than eight resources, compared to 40 percent of respondents with some coursework and 17 percent of respondents with minimal coursework.

## Perspective of Community College Advisors

To assess the barriers and supports in the process of transferring community college courses to a four-year teacher education program, we interviewed advisors from six community colleges in Iowa. Advisors were asked about the teacher education offerings at their community college, challenges in the process of selecting and transferring courses, and resources available to support students in the transfer process.

### Teacher Education Course Offerings

Community colleges in our sample typically offered general education coursework geared toward the requirements of a teacher education program. Teacher education programs may have specific general education course requirements within the broader core required by the four-year institution. For example, at one community college, teacher education students take American history rather than economics to fulfill their social science course requirement. In addition, some community colleges offer courses that meet teacher education requirements within a teacher education program. These include lower level teacher education courses that sometimes serve as prerequisites for junior-level teacher education courses.

The community colleges differed in the amount of coursework they offered for teacher education students, as follows:

- One community college offered only the general education courses required by teacher education programs and did not offer teacher education courses.
- Two of the community colleges combined the general education coursework with six to eight teacher education courses.
- Three community colleges offered general education coursework and more than 10 teacher education courses.

In addition, these community colleges had different approaches to structuring their education offerings. Two of the community colleges offered an A.A. with a concentration in elementary education, secondary education, or early childhood education. One community college offered a pre-education track for the A.A., and another offered an Education Careers degree. Another community college offered an associate's degree in liberal arts but allowed students to nominally declare education as their area of study.

### Supports for the Transfer Process

Community college advisors identified a variety of support mechanisms that students can access in the process of transferring community college courses to a teacher education program. During our interviews, community college advisors described the following supports for the transfer process.

**Articulation Agreements.** Articulation agreements provide the basis for transferring an A.A. from a community college to meet general education requirements at a four-year institution. The

agreements allow a student to transfer the degree as a single package of courses and enter the four-year institution as a junior. Iowa has statewide articulation agreements that define the transfer of associate's degrees to the three Regent universities, and community colleges in the state may have individual articulation agreements with private four-year institutions.

The community colleges in our sample described having articulation agreements in place with the Regent universities and several private institutions. Some of the community colleges had articulation agreements with a handful of private institutions to which students commonly transferred, including institutions located in close proximity to the community college or those that had a long-term relationship with the institution. One community college reported that it had articulation agreements with more than half of the private four-year institutions in the state.

Although students may not access or use the agreements themselves, advisors described how articulation agreements ensure the transfer of the A.A. to meet general education requirements at a four-year institution. According to the community college advisors, students who completed an A.A. transferred as juniors to four-year institutions with an articulation agreement. The advisors we interviewed described the process as fairly straightforward with few challenges; two advisors described the A.A. transfer as “easy” and “a smooth transition.”

**Transfer Plans.** Advisors at five of the community colleges described the use of transfer plans to support the transfer of teacher education courses to four-year institutions. These plans define which community college courses a teacher education program will accept to meet its teacher education requirements. Transfer plans are needed to articulate the transfer of courses for teacher education requirements because articulation agreements cover only the transfer of courses to meet general education requirements.

The transfer plans are often structured as a schedule or plan to guide course selection for students interested in pursuing an education degree. For example, one community college developed two-year sample plans for students interested in transferring to selected teacher education programs. The sample plans serve as a “strong recommendation” for which courses a student should take each semester at the community college in preparation for transfer to a teacher education program. The community colleges develop a separate transfer plan for each teacher education program. According to the advisors, students can access transfer plans during meetings with an advisor or through the community college website.

Three community colleges offered a generic transfer plan for students who had not yet decided which teacher education program they would attend. One community college created a generic transfer plan by comparing transfer plans for teacher education programs in order to identify which courses were accepted by a majority of the programs. An advisor at another community college showed students the transfer plans for multiple teacher education programs so they could understand the differences in courses accepted.

In the absence of formal articulation agreements for teacher education courses, transfer plans serve as informal arrangements between community colleges and four-year institutions to transfer these courses. The community college communicates with four-year institutions to determine how teacher education courses offered by the community college will meet teacher

education course requirements at the four-year institution. The transfer plans are regularly updated to account for changes in course offerings at the community college or changes in course requirements for teacher education programs. The advising center at one community college had responsibility for updating transfer plans, and the registrar's office at another community college tracked changes in teacher education requirements for the Regent universities.

Community college advisors noted that transfer plans represent an arrangement or understanding between the community college and four-year institution but that they are not formal agreements. One advisor emphasized that the transfer plans are not signed by anyone at the four-year institutions. Another described how transfer admissions counselors at four-year institutions approved the information contained in the transfer plans. Community college advisors recommended that students contact someone at the four-year institution to confirm the accuracy of information in the transfer plans. However, the community college advisors we interviewed had not experienced any issues with teacher education programs not accepting courses outlined in the transfer plans.

**Community College Advisors and Course Instructors.** Community college advisors and course instructors served as resources for the transfer of courses in all of the community colleges included in our sample. The structure and intensity of advising varied across the community colleges. One of the larger community colleges conducted group advising sessions twice a year for students pursuing a degree in education. During these sessions, course instructors provide one-on-one advising assistance, distribute transfer plans, and make general announcements related to course transfer. The community college also had advisors available for one-on-one meetings at an advising center.

Other community college advisors described one-on-one advising sessions with students that typically occurred twice a year during course registration periods. During these sessions, community college advisors discussed course selection, shared transfer plans, and answered any questions students had about the transfer process. Advisors also provided access to and information on contacts at the four-year institutions to which students commonly transferred. One advisor described using the transfer plans and working with students to develop an overall plan for their courses. The advisor noted the important role advisors play because of their knowledge of transfer requirements. An advisor at one of the smaller community colleges led visits to four-year institutions for interested students.

Community college instructors served as a resource in two ways. First, instructors provided information about the transfer process to students during teacher education classes at the community college. Instructors might discuss the transfer process, remind students to contact the four-year institutions they planned to transfer to, inform students about the time frame for the transfer process, and provide encouragement for the process. Course instructors at one community college talk with students during class about taking the Praxis exam; at another community college, an instructor distributes transfer plans. One instructor noted that when she taught a class for which one of the teacher education programs did not accept transfer, she identified students who planned to transfer to this teacher education program at the beginning of the class to inform them. Instructors at community colleges that offer a teacher education track or

concentration with teacher education courses are more likely to serve as a resource. For example, one community college described how course instructors tried to keep students who are enrolled in the education track informed about the transfer process.

Course instructors also served as a source for one-on-one advising on transfer issues. Students can meet with course instructors to discuss the transfer process or education careers more broadly. One instructor noted that students use her as a resource to talk about courses they need to take. Course instructors may have contacts at teacher education programs who can assist students with questions they have about the transfer process. One community college instructor said, “I know lots of people. I just call them and ask them, and then we find out and can get that information to the students.”

**Contacts at Four-Year Institutions.** Community college advisors discussed the importance of having students establish contact with someone at the four-year institution to begin “building [a] good relationship with the transfer institution.” One community college recommended that students contact the admissions department at four-year institutions they are considering so they can start receiving information about the school. The advisor felt it was important for students to share their information with the four-year institution. Two community colleges were more specific about students contacting advisors at the teacher education program they plan to attend. One of these community colleges provided contact information for teacher education programs on the transfer plans.

One advisor described how having a contact at the teacher education program provided another layer of knowledge about the transfer process. She described the advantage as having someone from the four-year institution clarify whether a course will fulfill a course requirement at the institution before taking the course. Several advisors described the importance of maintaining and nurturing relationships with four-year institutions.

The community colleges in our sample also received visits, referred to as College Visits, by representatives from four-year institutions. Occurring in the fall and spring semesters, they were described as fairly open-ended sessions when students could meet with an advisor to ask questions about transferring or attending the four-year institution.

**Websites for Community Colleges and Four-Year Institutions.** Community colleges and four-year institutions offer links to a variety of transfer resources on their websites, including transfer plans, course equivalency guides, articulation agreements, and transfer evaluation tools. Three community colleges mentioned that their websites provided links to the websites of the four-year institutions to which students commonly transferred. Advisors from three community colleges specifically cited the University of Northern Iowa’s Transfer Plan-It tool that allows students to input their community college courses to see how the courses will transfer. The websites of community colleges provided access to course catalogs and, for one community college, access to information about the Praxis exam. Although there is a “wealth of knowledge” on these websites, according to an advisor, one challenge can be a lack of initiative on the part of students to access and use the websites. One community college noted the usefulness of four-year institution websites that have separate sections devoted to information on transfer students.

**Introduction to Teaching Courses.** Three community colleges described the role of introduction to teaching courses in helping students determine whether they want to pursue a degree in education. These education classes were viewed as an important resource for students who were undecided about their major. The introduction to teaching course provides an overview of teaching and allows students an opportunity to determine if education is a good fit. According to one community college, the background course provides exposure to the education field, including experience in a school and a better understanding about teacher education requirements, such as admissions tests and teacher portfolios. An advisor at this community college noted that about two thirds of the students who initially consider teacher education decide not to pursue a degree in this area after the introduction to teaching course. At another community college, undecided students are encouraged to take the introduction to teaching course because it is commonly accepted by teacher education programs and, therefore, when students decide to pursue education, they are less likely fall behind in the courses they need to complete.

## **Challenges in the Transfer Process**

Community college advisors reported that students face few challenges in the process of transferring an associate's degree to meet general education requirements when an articulation agreement is in place. Advisors described this aspect of the transfer process as a “pretty smooth transition” and an “easy transfer.” However, advisors described challenges with the transfer of general education courses without an associate's degree, and with the transfer of teacher education coursework (with or without an associate's degree). In addition, the transfer of courses presented a challenge for students who delayed planning their transfer or who changed their mind about where they planned to transfer.

There are two important caveats for the findings in this section. First, community college advisors had more knowledge of the early stages in the course transfer process, when students identify and select courses, than the later stages of the process, when students submit transcripts to the four-year institution and complete the transfer of courses. As a result, our interviews may not adequately capture challenges that students face in their interaction with four-year institutions when community college transcripts are evaluated and transferred. Second, we selected community colleges that teacher education programs identified as sending the largest number of transfer students. By using this criterion, we may have selected community colleges that are less likely to have challenges in the transfer process.

The challenges identified by community college advisors are described below.

**Transfer of General Education Courses Without a Degree.** Students who transfer general education courses without completing an associate's degree typically transfer courses on a course-by-course basis. This means that a four-year institution conducts an audit or evaluation of each course to determine whether it transfers. Advisors from three community colleges described challenges related to the transfer of courses this way. Courses accepted by a four-year institution as part of an associate's degree may not be accepted when transferred without the degree. In addition, four-year institutions may count credits differently for courses transferred without a degree, and may be more “picky” about which courses will transfer. Advisors noted

that individuals taking one or two courses at the community college need to contact the four-year institution to confirm that the courses will transfer as expected.

**Different Teacher Education Course Requirements.** Teacher education programs have different teacher education course requirements and accept different teacher education courses for transfer. This creates a challenge for students because the teacher education courses a student should take at the community college differ, depending on the teacher education program. Advisors from three of the community colleges described this challenge related to the transfer of teacher education coursework. For example, an advisor described how one university does not accept the community college's educational foundations course because students are required to take the course at the university. According to an advisor from another community college, although one university accepts its evaluation and measurement course other universities do not require that particular course. Teacher education programs also have different field experience requirements for students entering their junior year.

The community colleges have adapted to this situation by relying on transfer plans to guide students in the selection of courses for a particular teacher education program. Advisors indicated that transfer plans guide course selection for students who know which teacher education program they plan to attend. However, even with the transfer plans, students who are undecided, or who change their minds, about which teacher education program they will attend face challenges. These students can initially take courses that are accepted by multiple teacher education programs using the generic transfer plans described above, but identifying courses accepted by all teacher education programs becomes more difficult over time. This presents a challenge because students often do not know which teacher education program they will attend until their second year at a community college.

As a result of the different teacher education course requirements, students may not fulfill all of the courses needed to begin as a junior at the teacher education school. Although the associate's degree ensures they transfer as a junior to the university, students who do not take all of the required teacher education courses may not have transfer status at the teacher education program within the college or university. Advisors from three community colleges noted that students who experience this challenge generally have to take additional courses, either at the community college or the four-year institution, before beginning the teacher education program. These courses may be prerequisites for higher-level courses at the teacher education program.

Two community college advisors suggested the need for an articulation agreement or degree that covers the transfer of courses to a teacher education program—similar to how articulation agreements ensure that the A.A. transfers to four-year institutions. The agreement or degree would define a set number of teacher education courses that teacher education programs would accept, reducing the likelihood that students would take courses that do not transfer. One community college advisor noted that a common associate's degree in teaching could support community college students in completing more of the teacher education program requirements, such as the portfolio, before transferring.

**Timing of Transfer Decision.** Several community college advisors noted that the transfer process is not as smooth when students are uncertain about whether they want to pursue an

education degree and which teacher education program they will attend. As one advisor noted, the transfer to a four-year institution is “pretty straightforward and easy,” but if students change their minds often “it becomes a problem.” Students who delay the decision to pursue an education degree may take general education courses or electives that do not meet the requirements of the teacher education program. For example, a student with an associate’s degree may not have taken specific general education courses required by the teacher education program.

**Preparation for Admissions Process.** The admissions process for teacher education programs presents a challenge for some students. Advisors noted that students are often unprepared for the admissions process—they may underestimate the effort required to complete the process or the length of time needed for the process. An advisor at one community college noted that the community college’s open admissions policy may give students misperceptions about the ease of the admissions process for four-year institutions, especially for first generation students. Students who fail to recognize the time required for the admissions process may not start it until too late in their second year of community college. Students may not understand that admission into a teacher education program requires a certain grade point average, or that required grade point averages serve as a minimum for some universities. In such cases, students may have to retake a course to raise their grade point average.

**Praxis Exam.** The Praxis exams required for entry into teacher education programs often present a challenge for community college students. Students may lack sufficient information about the Praxis or may not have adequate support in preparing for the exam. Two advisors noted that in contrast to students enrolled in a teacher education program, community college students pursuing a teaching degree are on their own to determine when, where, and how to take the Praxis exam. Because the Praxis is not a requirement of the community college, students may not realize the amount of time or preparation needed for the exam. Students at a teacher education program may take the exam at their program, but community college students must identify and travel to a location that offers the exam. Some advisors noted that they had received assistance from four-year institutions to understand the Praxis and support students in taking it.



## Summary of Findings

We briefly summarize findings from the survey of transfer students and the interviews with community college advisors.

### Survey of Transfer Students

**Type of Coursework Transferred.** The transfer of general education coursework was more common than the transfer of teacher education coursework. Almost all respondents (97 percent) attempted to transfer general education coursework, compared to 60 percent of respondents who attempted to transfer teacher education coursework. Respondents with an associate's degree were more likely than those without a degree to transfer teacher education courses.

**Opinion of Transfer Process.** Most respondents who attempted to transfer general education or teacher education coursework described the process as easy or somewhat easy. Eighty-six percent of respondents who tried to transfer general education coursework described the process as easy or somewhat easy, and 80 percent of students who attempted to transfer teacher education coursework described the process this way. Respondents with some coursework but no degree reported the most difficulty in transferring general education courses. The more community college credits respondents had completed (without a degree), the more likely they were to describe the process as difficult.

**Challenges in Transfer of General Education Courses.** About one in four respondents who attempted to transfer general education coursework repeated a community college course to meet general education requirements. The same proportion took more community college courses than originally expected to meet general education requirements. Just over 15 percent of respondents who attempted to transfer general education coursework had fewer courses accepted by their four-year institution than expected.

**Challenges in Transfer of Teacher Education Courses.** Among respondents who attempted to transfer teacher education coursework: 26 percent had fewer teacher education courses accepted than they expected, and—in order to meet teacher education requirements—26 percent repeated a community college course and 22 percent took more community college courses than they originally expected. Respondents with an associate's degree were more likely to report that their four-year institution accepted fewer courses than they expected; respondents with some coursework were more likely to repeat a course or take more courses than originally anticipated.

**Most Commonly Used Transfer Resources.** The most common resources used by respondents came from four-year institutions: transfer advisors, degree audits, websites of four-year institutions, transfer plans, and transfer evaluations. Eighty-eight percent of respondents used an advisor from a four-year institution, and between 64 percent and 82 percent of respondents used the other resources available from four-year institutions. At least two thirds of respondents who availed themselves of these resources described them as useful or somewhat useful. In addition, more than 80 percent of respondents used a course equivalency guide during the transfer process. A relatively high proportion of respondents who used a course equivalency guide described it as useful or somewhat useful.

**Other Transfer Resources.** Compared to resources from a four-year institution, a lower proportion of respondents used a community college advisor or a community college transfer plan. About 60 percent of those respondents who used these resources found them useful or somewhat useful. A majority of respondents identified a teacher or other educator as a resource for the transfer process, and most of those respondents described these teachers and educators as a useful source for information.

## **Interviews with Community College Advisors**

**Transfer of Associate's Degree.** Advisors viewed the process of transferring associate's degrees to meet general education requirements as smooth, with few challenges. Articulation agreements facilitated the transfer of community college courses to meet general education course requirements.

**Transfer Plans.** Transfer plans are used by community colleges to (1) define the courses a teacher education program will accept from a community college, and (2) guide students in selecting courses that will transfer to their teacher education program. Community college advisors consistently identified transfer plans as an important resource for the transfer of teacher education coursework. The plans serve the dual role of defining how courses transfer and guiding course selection for community college students.

**Other Supports for the Transfer Process.** Community college advisors viewed advising, course instructors, and Internet resources as useful tools to support the transfer process. Community college advisors and course instructors assist students in selecting courses, link students with contacts at four-year institutions, and inform them about the application process for a teacher education program. Advisors refer students to the Internet for a variety of resources about the transfer process, including course equivalency guides, transfer plans, and online transfer tools.

**Contact with Four-Year Institutions.** Community college advisors recommend that students establish a contact at the four-year institution where they plan to transfer. Because four-year institutions ultimately decide whether courses transfer, most community college advisors recommend that students contact the four-year institution they plan to attend.

**Prevalence of Challenges in Course Transfer.** Although students face few challenges in transferring an associate's degree to general education requirements when an articulation agreement is in place, advisors described challenges with the transfer of general education courses without an associate's degree, and with the transfer of teacher education coursework (with or without an associate's degree). In addition, the transfer of courses presented a challenge for students who delayed planning their transfer or who changed their mind about where they planned to transfer.

**Differences in Course Requirements and Course Transfer.** One challenge is that teacher education programs have different teacher education course requirements and accept different teacher education courses for transfer. According to community college advisors, the different

course requirements make it difficult for students who have not decided or who change their mind about which teacher education program they will attend. These students may be more likely to take courses that do not transfer or need to repeat a course before transferring.

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## Appendix A. Online Survey

### Course Transfer Survey

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- 1 Did you take any community college courses before enrolling at your *current* four-year institution?

YES

NO

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- 2 Which community college did you attend before enrolling at your current four-year institution? (If more than one, choose the most *recent*).

- ☐ Clinton Community College
  - ☐ Des Moines Area Community College
  - ☐ Eastern Iowa Community College
  - ☐ Ellsworth Community College
  - ☐ Hawkeye Community College
  - ☐ Indian Hills Community College
  - ☐ Iowa Central Community College
  - ☐ Iowa Lakes Community College
  - ☐ Iowa Valley Community College
  - ☐ Iowa Western Community College
  - ☐ Kirkwood Community College
  - ☐ Marshalltown Community College
  - ☐ Muscatine Community College
  - ☐ Northeast Iowa Community College
  - ☐ North Iowa Community College
  - ☐ Northwest Iowa Community College
  - ☐ Scott Community College
  - ☐ Southeastern Community College
  - ☐ Southwestern Community College
  - ☐ Western Iowa Tech Community College
  - ☐ Other. Please specify.
-

3 How many course credits did you complete at a community college before attending your current institution?

- ☐ Less than 15 credit hours
- ☐ 16— 30 credit hours
- ☐ 31— 60 credit hours
- ☐ More than 60 credit hours

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4 What was your *primary* area of study at the community college?

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5 Indicate any degrees you received before transferring to your current four-year institution. *Select all that apply.*

- ☐ Associate of Arts (AA)
- ☐ Associate of Science (AS)
- ☐ Associate of General Studies (AGS)
- ☐ Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Ph.D
- ☐ Did not receive a degree
- ☐ Other. Please specify.

6 What was your status when you **first transferred** from a community college to your current four-year institution?

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior
- ☐ Graduate student
- ☐ Other. Please specify.

---

7 How many course credits have you completed at your current four-year institution?

- ☐ Less than 15 credit hours
- ☐ 16— 30 credit hours
- ☐ 31— 60 credit hours
- ☐ More than 60 credit hours

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8 Are you currently attending the main campus or a university center at your current four-year institution?

- ☐ Main campus
- ☐ University center
- ☐ Other. Please specify.

- 
- 9 Are you currently participating in a 2-plus-2 program at your institution? (This is a program between your community college and your four-year institution).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure
- ☐ Other. Please specify.

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### Transfer Planning

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- 10 When did you initially seek information about transferring from a community college to your *current four-year institution*?

- ☐ Before enrolling in a community college
- ☐ During my first year at a community college
- ☐ During my second year at a community college
- ☐ During my third year or any later year at a community college
- ☐ After completing my community college degree
- ☐ After leaving the community college without a degree
- ☐ Other. Please specify.

- 
- 11 When did you initially seek information about transferring from a community college to your *current teacher education program*?

- ☐ Before enrolling in a community college
- ☐ During my first year at a community college
- ☐ During my second year at a community college
- ☐ During my third year or any later year at a community college
- ☐ After completing my community college degree
- ☐ After leaving the community college without a degree
- ☐ After enrolling at a four-year institution
- ☐ Other. Please specify.

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### Transferring General Education Courses

The following questions focus on your experience in transferring community college courses to meet **general education** course requirements at your current institution.

- 12 While attending a community college, did you *enroll in* courses that you thought would meet the **general education** course requirements at your current institution?

☐ YES ☐ NO

- 13 Did you *attempt to transfer* any of your community college courses to meet the **general education** course requirements at your current institution?

☐ YES ☐ NO

- 14 Did your current institution *count* any of your community college courses toward its **general education** course requirements?

☐ YES ☐ NO

- 15 How would you describe the process of *transferring* community college courses to meet the **general education** course requirements at your current institution?

Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult	Not Applicable
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

- 16 Did your current institution count your *community college degree* as credit toward its **general education** course requirements?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not applicable

## Course Transfer Survey

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17 Was the number of community college courses that your current institution accepted for its **general education** course requirements:

- ☐ More than you expected
- ☐ The same as you expected
- ☐ Less than you expected
- ☐ Not applicable

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18 Did you experience any of the following situations in transferring community college courses to meet **general education** requirements? *Select all that apply.*

- ☐ I retook one or more community college courses to meet a general education requirement at my current institution.
- ☐ I took more community college courses than I originally anticipated to meet general education requirements at my current institution.
- ☐ I took remediation classes to meet a general education requirement at my current institution.
- ☐ I took an exam (e.g., CLEP, AP, or departmental) to meet a general education course requirement at my current institution.

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19 Describe any other challenges you faced in transferring your community college courses to meet **general education** requirements.

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### Transferring Teacher Education Courses

The following questions focus on your experience in transferring community college courses to meet **teacher education** course requirements at your current institution.

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- 20 While attending a community college did you *enroll in* courses that you thought would meet the **teacher education** course requirements at your current institution?

YES

NO

- 
- 21 Did you *attempt to transfer* any of your community college courses to meet the **teacher education** course requirements at your current institution?

YES

NO

- 
- 22 Did your current institution *count* any of your community college courses to meet its **teacher education** course requirements?

YES

NO

- 
- 23 How would you describe the process of *transferring* community college courses to meet **teacher education** course requirements at your current institution?

Easy

Somewhat Easy

Somewhat Difficult

Difficult

Not Applicable

1

2

3

4

5

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---

24 Was the number of community college courses that your current

institution accepted for its **teacher education** course requirements:

- ☐ More than you expected
- ☐ The same as you expected
- ☐ Less than you expected
- ☐ Not applicable

---

25 Did you experience any of the following situations in transferring community college courses to meet **general education** requirements? *Select all that apply.*

- ☐ I retook one or more community college courses to meet a teacher education course requirement at my current institution.
- ☐ I took more community college courses than I originally anticipated to meet a teacher education course requirement at my current institution.
- ☐ I took one or more community college courses to fulfill a teacher education course requirement, but my current institution did *not* accept the courses.
- ☐ I participated in a teaching field experience at my community college, but the field experience did not transfer to my current institution.

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26 Describe any other challenges you faced in transferring community college courses to meet **teacher education** requirements of your current institution.

- 27** The following is a list of resources you may have used in transferring community college courses to your current institution. Indicate the degree to which these resources were useful in helping you transfer your community college courses.

	1 Very Useful	2 Useful	3 Somewhat Useful	4 Not Useful	5 Did not use the resource
Community college advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer plan from the community college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer plan from your current university or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer evaluation from your current university or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advisor or staff person from your current university or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course equivalency guide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online transfer tool (e.g., Transfer Plan-It)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Degree audit from your current university or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Articulation agreement between the community college and four-year university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website for your current university or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School teacher or teacher educator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 28 Describe any other resources you used in transferring community college courses to your current institution.

### Admissions Process

We are also interested in understanding your experience with the admissions process for your current institution.

- 29 How would you describe the admissions process for your current four-year institution?

Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult
1	2	3	4

- 30 Your teacher education program required an admissions process separate from your four-year institution's admissions process. How would you describe the admissions process for your current teacher education program?

Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult
1	2	3	4



- 31** The following is a list of resources you may have used to help with the admissions process at your current institution. Indicate the degree to which these resources were useful in helping with transferring your community college courses.

	1 Very Useful	2 Useful	3 Somewhat Useful	4 Not Useful	5 Did not use the resource
Community college advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer fair at the community college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructor or faculty member at the community college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admissions counselor or advisor at your current four-year institution or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructor or faculty member at your current four-year institution or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Website of your current four-year institution or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brochures or printed materials from your current four-year institution or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open house for community college transfer students at your current four-year institution or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individual or group visit to your current four-year institution or teacher education program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School teacher or other educator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 32 Describe any other resources you used to complete the admissions process for your current four-year institution and teacher education program.

- 33 The following is a list of admissions requirements for your *four-year institution*. Rate the degree of ease or difficulty in meeting each requirement.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	I did not have to meet the requirement
Grade Point Average (GPA) requirement				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admission exams (e.g., C-BASE, etc.)				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
General education requirements				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admissions interview				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 34 The following is a list of admissions requirements for your *teacher education program*. Rate the degree of ease or difficulty in meeting each requirement.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	I did not have to meet this requirement
Grade Point Average (GPA) requirement				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basic skills exam (e.g., PPST, Praxis I)				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher education course requirements				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching field experience				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 35 Describe any other aspects of the admissions process that you found challenging.



## Background Information

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**36** Indicate your gender.

- ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
- 

**37** Indicate your ethnicity.

- ☐ White
  - ☐ Black/African American
  - ☐ Hispanic
  - ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native
  - ☐ Asian
  - ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
  - ☐ Other. Please specify.  
.....  
.....
- 

**38** Indicate your age.

- ☐ Younger than 18 years
- ☐ 18—24
- ☐ 25—29
  
- ☐ 30—34
- ☐ 35—39
- ☐ 40—44
- ☐ 45—49
- ☐ 50 years or older

## **Appendix B.**

### **Telephone Interview Protocol**

#### **Background**

1. What is your role at the community college? How long have you been in your role?
2. In a typical semester/quarter, how many students do you assist who are interested in transferring to a four-year university? How many of these transfer students are specifically interested in transferring into a teacher education program?
  - *Probe:* What teacher education programs do your students typically transfer to?
  - *Probe:* In a typical semester/quarter, what proportion of students interested in transferring to a teacher education program successfully make the transition?

#### **Transfer Courses and Agreements**

3. What types of courses does your community college offer for students who are interested in transferring to a teacher education program? Does your community college offer general education and teacher education courses?
  - *Probe:* Do you have a separate track or program for students interested in becoming a teacher? If so, what is the name of this track or program? What is its goal/purpose? When students in this track or program transfer to a teacher education program, what is their status in the teacher education program?
4. Does your community college have any formal or informal course transfer agreements with teacher education programs at four-year institutions? If so...
  - *Probe:* Approximately how many four-year institutions does the community college have agreements with?
  - *Probe:* Do the agreements allow students to transfer (a) individual courses, (b) a block of courses, (c) a community college degree, (d) or something else? Which approach is more common?
  - *Probe:* Are these agreements formal, written documents? Or are they informal verbal commitments from staff at the four-year institutions?
5. How often do you communicate with advisors/counselors who work with community college transfer students at teacher education programs at four-year institutions?
  - *Probe:* What is the purpose of your communication?

#### **Transfer Process**

6. At what point do students typically begin planning their transfer to a teacher education program? Why?
  - *Probe:* At what point *should* a student begin planning their transfer to a teacher education program? Why?

- *Probe:* What factors affect when a student begins planning their transfer to a teacher education program?
7. How do students enrolled at your community college *identify courses* that will transfer to a teacher education program at a four-year institution?
    - *Probe:* What **resources** are available to assist students in identifying the courses they need to take to transfer to a teacher education program? Which resources are used most often? Why?
    - *Probe:* What are the **challenges** students face in identifying courses they need to take to transfer to a teacher education program? Which challenges are most common? How could these challenges be addressed?
    - *Probe:* Are there differences in the resources and challenges, based on whether students are identifying general education or teacher education courses?
  8. When students make the transition to a teacher education program, how do they *transfer their community college courses* to the teacher education program?
    - *Probe:* What **resources** are available to assist students in transferring their community college courses to a teacher education program? Which resources are used most often? Why?
    - *Probe:* What **challenges** do students face in transferring their community college courses to a teacher education program? How could these challenges be addressed?
    - *Probe:* Are there differences in the resources and challenges, based on whether students are transferring general education or teacher education courses?
  9. What aspects of the admissions process for a teacher education program, besides transferring courses, present a challenge for students? Why?
    - *Probe:* Describe any challenges related to (a) meeting the minimum GPA requirement, (b) preparing for or taking an admissions exams, (c) preparing for or taking a Basic Skills exam (Praxis or CAAP), or (d) other admissions requirements?
    - *Probe:* Are challenges in the admission process different for the four-year institution and the teacher education program? If so, how?
    - *Probe:* What resources are available to assist students in completing these other aspects of the admissions process?

## Lessons Learned

10. From your perspective, what are the three main challenges for students who transfer from a community college to a teacher education program? Why?
  - *Probe:* What can be done to address these challenges?
11. From your perspective, what are the three main resources or supports that are critical for students who transfer from a community college to a teacher education program?
  - *Probe:* Why are these resources important?
  - *Probe:* What can be done to make them more available?

12. In your opinion, are there certain types of students who face more barriers to transferring into a teacher education program?
  - *Probe:* If so, what types of students and why?
13. Are there any other lessons you have learned about the transfer process that we have not discussed? Is there anything else you would like to share about the transfer process?

